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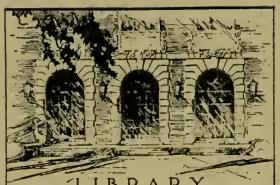

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Mariamne.

VOLUME I.

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Rev J. St. Billingsley 1828

Mariamne:

an

Historical Novel

of

Palestine.

" If you will see a pageant truly play'd,
Between the pale complexion of true love
And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain,
Go hence a little, and I shall conduct you,
If you will mark it."—AS YOU LIKE IT.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

GEO. B. WHITTAKER,

AVE-MARIA LANE.

1825.

LONDON:

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To Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, &c. &c.

THIS WORK IS,

BY HIS PERMISSION, DEDICATED,

WITH THE

SINCEREST SENTIMENTS OF RESPECT AND ADMIRATION.

SIR,

WHEN so many brilliant productions of genius are presented to the world, I consider it no common nor inconsiderable honour being allowed to dedicate this humble attempt to you. It will not, I trust, be deemed pre-

sumptuous in me to say, how great a portion of the pleasure is derived from a conviction, that you who are the most capable of detecting the imperfections of a work of this nature, will be lenient in your censures, and willing to appreciate any trifling merit it may possess.

The public only look for success; and perhaps with reason, pay no attention to the circumstances under which any literary production was composed. To YOU I may say, that these volumes have been written, at intervals, within the last year, when liberated from severer

occupations, and somewhat relieved from deep anxiety. I am conscious that the advice of a critical friend, and an ampler library, would have enabled me to produce a book more worthy of your distinguished acceptance, and of general notice, and therefore regret not possessing those advantages.

I wish to explain the reason of my having, in many instances, adopted the language of sacred poetry in the imitations of several of the Hebrew parallelisms.

It is satisfactorily proved by the

Lord Bishop of Limerick in his work, so profoundly learned, and of the most refined taste, entitled "Sacred Literature," that *centos*, from various parts of the Old Testament are to be found in the gospels and apostolical epistles, and those, so adapted as to form perfect specimens of Hebrew poetry.

As the Jewish people were, at an early period of life, accurately instructed in those books which contain, not only their theological but municipal laws, and the promises of the Messiah; it may be presumed, that they were well acquainted with their style

and contents: this opinion is considerably strengthened by observing, that references, often amounting to quotations, are made by the sacred writers, even when speaking of things to come, and by individuals when under the influence of the passions.

I have applied the ode sung at the dedication of the first Temple to the feast of tabernacles; its connection with that, admitted to be used, is obvious: reasons could be advanced to support the application, but as it is a matter of no importance, to state them would be irrelative. I have also

availed myself of some topographical uncertainties when it suited my purpose.

That YOU may not deem this explanation intrusive; and may long remain to ornament your country and diffuse instruction and amusement to admiring nations, is the sincere wish of,

SIR,

Your most obedient,

and obliged Servant,

THE AUTHOR OF MARIAMNE.

March 10, 1825.

Mariamne.

CHAPTER I.

The members of the Sanhedrin were convened; Hyrcanus, the President and High Priest, sat on his elevated seat with his eyes fixed on the entrance of the hall, and with anxiety depicted on his brow. On either side were placed the seventy judges, so ranged as to form a vast semicircle, at the extremity of which were the scribes prepared to commit to writing the words which were uttered after the proceedings had commenced.

Some were engaged in earnest conversation, others arranging their tablets, and many, with severity pourtrayed on their countenances, appeared absorbed in thought.

The lattices were partly closed to exclude the heat and beaming rays of the sun. A gleam of light from a lofty window behind and above the High Priest, illumined a broad space across the centre of the court, falling in its way partly on the face, hand, and robes of Hyrcanus, attired in a vest of blue, bound with a wrought girdle of flowers and gold, and adorned with a fringe on which pomegranates were worked, interspersed with bells of gold: the rays were reflected from the sardonyx on his left shoulder, which bore the names of six of the tribes of Israel, and also glittered on a portion of the breastplate of precious stones suspended with strings of blue from rings of the most precious metal. A halo of light seemed burning on the golden plate and sacred words engraven on it, and on the blue and golden swathes of his mitre.

The Rabbis near him shared in the stream of light, displaying their clear dark faces and carefully adjusted beards, bright phylacteries ornamented with passages from the law, the letters of which were formed of precious stones on brilliant colours, and their flowing robes of graver

hues. Those continuing the remoter curves of the semicircle gradually became deeper in shadow, and then progressively lighter until the scribes were exposed to the full stream of day.

A distant murmur attracted the attention of the assembled judges. Hyrcanus slow-moving eye assumed a more animated character, and a slight tinge of red glowed in his dark brown cheek. Immediately after, Herod, the governor of Galilee, stood in the centre before the President, surrounded by a band of fierce and armed warriors. Silence reigned through the assembly, while every eye was fixed on him. He was in the early prime of manhood; his open fiery eyes looked slowly round on the whole semicircle, while his dilating nostril and closing mouth too truly told the vengeance kindling in his bosom: he moved, and his purple robe unfolding, displayed his gleaming and highly studded arms and corslet. No one spoke; no accuser appeared; doubt and awe possessed them. Without turning he beckoned with his finger, and an unhelmed warrior came, who re-

ceived on his knee a letter, which he delivered with profound obeisance to Hyrcanus, saying, "From Sextus Cæsar." He blushed while reading it, but a look of satisfaction crossed his face.

Suddenly Sameas arose, with indignation breathing from his countenance—

"Ye who are my assessors here, and thou, O King, have never yet beheld the parallel to this. Those who have hitherto appeared before the Sanhedrin of Israel have come submissive, clothed in mourning garments, and with hair dishevelled: but this admirable Herod, accused of murder, and called to take his trial, appears arrayed in purple, with anointed hair and bands of armed men, that he may murder us if we condemn him by our law, and thus, by overbearing justice, escape death. I complain not against Herod, who is more concerned for his own safety than the laws, but against ye judges, and thou, O King, who can permit him thus to insult the Sanhedrin of Israel. Listen, ye betrayers of rights, the Lord is great, and will not permit his laws thus to be insulted.—That very

Herod whom you are going to absolve and dismiss, will hereafter punish you and your king."

After uttering with solemnity this awful prophecy he ceased speaking, but remained standing with his eye scrutinizing the countenance of Hyrcanus, and his arm extended towards Herod. A death-like silence ensued, which was followed by a sudden burst of indignation from many of the Rabbis, who called loudly for the condemnation of the accused. Herod scowled on them a fierce and fearless look, mingled with a contemptuous smile. His manner excited the wrath and clamour of many of the judges, which Hyrcanus allayed by adjourning the Sanhedrin. Herod, breathing defiance, quitted the hall without either defending himself or offering a remark.

During the night Hyrcanus warned him to depart, and he fled to Damascus. There he purchased the protection of Sextus Cæsar; sent a defiance to the Sanhedrin, and a refusal to obey the summons to appear before it.

Herod, conscious of having delivered Galilee

from terror and plunder, by justly ordering Hezekiah and his freebooters to be executed, was so incensed against the Sanhedrin, that he raised an army, and was on the point of marching against Jerusalem with the intention of deposing Hyrcanus, and punishing those who had voted for his condemnation. He endeavoured to induce his father Antipater, and his elder brother Phasaelus, to join in the enterprise. Antipater, deeply versed in the conflicting opinions and interests both of the Jewish sects and Roman power, with difficulty, though aided by Phasaelus, dissuaded him from wreaking his intended vengeance.

Though the fiery spirit of Herod had been wounded, his capacious understanding perceived the truth of his father's reasons, and he for a time subdued the resentment which lay smothering in his bosom.

Antipater and Phasaelus sped to Jerusalem for the purpose of exercising their influence with Hyrcanus, and Malichus, the next to him in power, as well as to prevent any suspicion of their being leagued with Herod, and to avoid

bringing down the excited wrath of the inimical Rabbis on their heads.

Antipater had been the friend of Malichus, and had often shielded him from impending danger, but he, unmindful of all these benefits, caused his friend to be poisoned. This act of perfidy and murder inflamed the smouldering vengeance of Herod, who privately applied to Cassius, concealed his suspicions from Malichus, and led him to a spot on his road to Tyre, where a party of Roman soldiers seized and slew him.

The partisans of Malichus in Jerusalem instigated Hyrcanus to assist them in resenting the death of Malichus on the sons of Antipater. Herod being sick at Damascus, the whole storm assailed his brother Phasaelus, who resisted it with success until Herod arrived, and with him quelled the faction.

The indolence and incapacity of Hyrcanus, the weakness of the people from their numerous divisions, and the near extinction of the Asmonean race, were obvious to the quick and capacious understanding of Herod: he saw that his influence, reputation, and close connection with

the Roman chiefs, were means by which he would be enabled to gratify his ambition, and aggrandise himself.

The natural passions were in him as if stamped with an impress of fire. Every affection and influence was ardent while it lasted, and many of them were so deeply imbued in his mind that they tinged every action with their hue. Daring ambition, without the enchanter's spell, a love of glory, was the leading feature of his character in his early manhood. The possession of power was the aim of this ambition. The vehemence of his passions and his daring spirit were often opposed to his power of dissimulation and his extraordinary craftiness, unless the object was worthy of engrossing his whole attention. When he reflected on the condition of the Jewish state and his own commanding position, he saw that the way to the throne was open; the means alone required his deep consideration.

The evening sacrifice was finished, the priests and people were retiring, when Herod withdrew, and paced with slow and thoughtful steps the

hallowed pavement before the temple, while his mind thus revolved the matter occupying his thoughts.

" Malichus, whom I punished for murdering his faithful friend, my father, is the adherent and the next in power to the imbecile Prince and Priest Hyrcanus, who must have been conscious of his guilt, since at his palace they were banqueting when the fatal poison was given him to drink—Is Hyrcanus worthy to rule over the Jewish state? Shall he be privy to my father's murder, and go unpunished?—I might cut him off, or accuse him to the Roman. Neither course will do—these stubborn Jews bear an instinctive love to the Asmonean race, and would yell after me like tygresses for their young, and so check me in my full career. To accuse him to the grasping Roman would be a sorry precedent for those who should hereafter take Hyrcanus place. To depose him from the high priesthood for murder would excite the jealous Cæsar's anger, and the failure of proof would expose me to the deadly hatred of one, and my assumption of authority to the suspicion of the other. Yet will I

have my will and be here some one of note, a ruler; why not their king? Hyrcanus grandson, Aristobulus, is yet a beardless boy, and cannot be their priest and prince; the former let him be, so that I were the latter. But I am not of Asmonean blood—these circumcised hypocrites will call me in scorn Ascalonite; yet I will be their ruler and cast back their scorn, I did not make myself, and will not brook their insult. Ha! I have heard so, and heard whispered too, that the half-besotted, half-genius Antony, spoke highly of her beauty, and that she blushing withdrew with such pride of gait, that even the triumvir felt the majesty of her presence. She is Hyrcanus grandchild, the next to Aristobulus, and the last of the Asmonean race; I am Governor of Idumæa, and why should I not wive with her, and so become one of the adored race? Well thought of. The beauteous *Mariamne* is the price of Hyrcanus pardon—I will seek the Prince and fathom him."

He left the Temple, and called, when beyond the outer gate, the captain of his guard and told him, "Go and march a heavy armed legion

and some troops of horse before the palace, bid them sound their clarions and do all service of respect as they pass the Prince, then lodge them near the main guard."

The captain obeyed.

"That will convince him, before I come, of my power, and perchance, of my respect. If this beauteous Asmonean answers to what I have heard, and I do love her, and that smooth tongued Antony has not captivated her, then shall I have what is needful for my very life; two excitements worthy of my utmost exertion, and of all my thoughts, power, and love; the former to be obtained by cherishing the latter. A sweeter mode of gaining what my nature was born to hold could never have been devised; the very thought alone exhilarates me, and I will hasten to the palace."

Hyrcanus sat musing on the late events, and chafing at the Idumæan power which had just been displayed before his palace, when Herod was announced. The Prince received him with affability, spoke of the respect so fitly shewn by his soldiers, and admired their warlike ap-

pearance. Herod, with some degree of cheerfulness, yet with emphasis, remarked;

"It is fortunate that we are here, for your factions are fierce and numerous, and require your prompt and powerful interference. It has yielded me more than common pleasure to have been your ally, and I may now add, what our ancient friendship sanctions, that I am and shall be ready to receive your commands whenever you deem it necessary to seek my service. If factions rise too high, the Roman may usurp the power that of right belongs to you and your princely race.—How fares your grandson?"

"He is well, but too much under the influence of Felix, who will, I fear, contaminate the youth."

"I should feel most honoured if he would come to Idumæa with me. We have not the delights of Jerusalem to offer him, but many pleasures for which he would vainly seek here. When he pays his duty to you, make known to him your friend's desire.—Is his sister yet affianced?"

"I wish she were, for I dread the overtures

of one whose senses seem enslaved by excess of sensuality. She will not, she cannot be united to an unbelieving Gentile: and who among the Jewish race is worthy of such an alliance?"

"Those are anxious thoughts for you, Hyrcanus; and as Time has placed his silver signet on your head, 'twere well if some good chance would turn them into thoughts of joy."

While conversing on different matters, a door was gently opened, and the bright moon-beams discovered a light form robed in white, which starting at the sight of Herod, hastily withdrew, though Hyrcanus twice called; "Mariamne, come and receive your accustomed blessing before you sleep."

She did not return. The Tetrarch had seen for a moment her face illuminated by the soft moonlight, and, in an instant, tinged with a blush at having suddenly entered and met the quick glance of a stranger. Herod's ardent feelings were greatly excited by the transitory and beautiful vision he had seen; and he returned to his tent with a mind full of conflicting and quick succeeding thoughts.

He arose earlier than usual, and clothed himself in a tunic of purple silk, which displayed his manly form, by adhering to his person: he wore a glittering helmet of polished brass, with a single crest, from which waved a crimson plume: his sandals were laced with thongs of embroidered gold; and his remaining dress was composed of white linen, and a robe of state. Without arms and with few attendants, he rode to the palace, and found Hyrcanus returned from the morning service of the temple. After some preliminary conversation, he asked to be made known to the descendants of his race, to whose parents his father had been devoted. Hyrcanus summoned Mariamne; she came; and Herod was made known to her.

The impression of the preceding evening, was more than realised. Mariamne was approaching the age of womanhood. Her manner partook of all the retiring modesty of her years, mingled with a consciousness of rank, and a natural dignity which added to her soft, feminine, and bewitching beauty. Her form had not attained its full proportion; but pro-

mised, like the budding flower, to become more perfect. She was above the usual height, without being tall, and moved with a native grace that no art can give, and which proved the symmetry of her proportions. Her hands and feet were also proofs of the high-born race from which she descended. Her luxuriant hair was of the deepest black, soft, shining, and so fine, that the lightest breeze waved its ringlets. Her forehead was large, and of the purest white, which added to the lustre of her dark intelligent and expressive eyes, whose softness was improved by the long lashes, which seemed to terminate at their points in a line of softened light. Her nose was slightly aquiline. Her mouth was closed, yet finely marked, and round it gentleness and loveliness balanced the firmness and command which were indicated by these features. The shape of her face was perfect. She seemed formed to be adored, and yet to command with soft and irresistible dignity. Her simple attire, if possible, added to her winning beauty.—A light veil, embroidered round the edge with gold, was fastened beneath

her floating hair, and fell behind her right shoulder over her curiously ornamented vest, which reached her neck. She wore a robe open from her shoulders to her girdle, and covering below the knee; the usual eastern dress fastened above the ancle with bracelets of gold and gems. Her white and silver ornamented sandal served to display the still purer colour of the snowy spaces between its fastenings and the bracelets.

Herod could not suppress the ardent admiration he felt: his intent gaze brought a passing blush to her face, which added to the fire kindling in his heart.

The High Priest was suddenly summoned away. Mariamne would have retired, but Herod in a gentle and anxious voice asked for her brother. At the mention of his name, her countenance was lighted up; for she loved him, not only as a brother, but as the last scion of her race, of which she was deeply and justly proud.

"Felix has been with him for some days past, instructing him, I hear, in the mutual

engagements between our State and the Roman Power."

The precedence given to Judæa informed the Tetrarch of her sentiments on that head, and increased yet more his admiration.

"Those engagements will, I trust, be useful to your people, and secure your government. Should Aristobulus rule hereafter in Jerusalem, I doubt not, being an Asmonean Prince, he will maintain his birthright."

While he spoke these words, Mariamne's countenance was lighted up with more than usual animation, and she looked on him as if his words were such as she had longed to hear; then, with some emphasis, remarked,

"My Sire deplores, that numerous factions harass us. Oh that all the promised land were as one in feeling and in action!"

"What then?" asked the admiring warrior, with gentle accent.

"Our Temple would not be profaned; our holy laws over-ruled; our people divided; and our land a prey."

The ardent Herod could not contain his ad-

miration: his eyes were sparkling with delight, and his heart beating with unwonted quickness, he eagerly exclaimed,—

"You utter my thoughts,—your bosom burns with feelings that have long been mine. My fathers were devoted to your noble parents; and I, with greater power, inherit their devotion. The interest of your race is mine. Oh, beauteous Mariamne, I trust the hour may come, when I may aid your brother in re-establishing peace and union among his people."

As he spoke, her eyes assumed a look of gratitude,—as if the wish nearest her heart had been unexpectedly fulfilled. Her expression partook of tenderness, which added fuel to his rising passion.

Hyrcanus returned; and Mariamne retired, bidding Herod farewell, in a manner expressive of her satisfaction. She had scarcely closed the door when, turning to the High Priest, he said;

"Well might Antony bestow his praises on such a woman as Mariamne. What, Sire, did he say of her? What wishes did he express concerning her? Did he desire to make her a

handmaid to his Egyptian mistress? Did he seek to pluck the flower, then leave it to be crushed or poisoned by that subtle and vicious woman? You know, Hyrcanus, that our races have long held together; and I trust that nothing now will part them.—Tell me, as your friend, the fears, the hopes you have for Mariamne, and her brother."

"I have fewer fears for him than for her. The people, of every faction, will uphold his succeeding to the Priesthood and the Throne.—With Herod's aid, and his own discretion, he may long reign here; but for Mariamne, I have many sad forebodings. Antony may turn his admiration to a demand of her in marriage: then, between him and some right to the Jewish throne, would be, only the young and inexperienced Aristobulus. She would refuse a heathen and a gross idolater; but what could all her resolution do against his power? These thoughts perplex me, and seem destined to bring down, like our father Jacob's, my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

"Hyrcanus, we will talk of this again.—I

hear the summons of my guards, who are to return to day to Idumæa: and I must see them," —he did obeisance, and retired.

He rode to his tent, not pondering or calmly reflecting on what had passed, but, with high and ardent spirits that such an enterprise was open to him, and with love fast firing every thought. He addressed, with uncommon animation, those around him: scattered praises, and presents, and promotion, among his men: and, when armed to review his troops, commanded with a louder voice; and often tried, in sport, the mettle of his war-horse.

Those who knew him were certain that some great matter was on his mind, and soon surmises and reports pervaded the camp, and all partook of his exhilaration.

CHAPTER II.

HEROD sought his sister and confidante Salome: on his communicating to her his love and admiration for Mariamne, and some of the advantages of an alliance with her, she eagerly exclaimed—

"Would you repudiate the gentle Doris, and leave your first-born son? What will your Idumæans say at your desertion of the woman of their nation? Do not suffer this foolish passion to lead you headlong to destruction."

He avoided mentioning his intention of divorcing Doris, but long and zealously urged the advantages of being allied to the Asmonean race, and pointed out the path it opened to power and wealth. She on the other hand pleaded for Doris, and placed the jealousy and factious spirit of the Jews as insuperable objec-

tions to his attempting to obtain the government of Jerusalem. She told him of the popularity, the beauty and ability of Aristobulus, who would assume, on Hyrcanus death or resignation, the sacerdotal and regal power, supported by the whole Jewish people. Herod's determination had been fixed, and he sought rather the sanction than the advice of his sister: he left her chagrined, but not shaken in his purpose.

Salome being alone gave way to such thoughts as were natural to her.

"He will pursue and gain his end unless some unexpected means are taken to deter him. This Mariamne is, I hear, the counterpart of Doris: I can sway her to my purposes, for she is what the world calls amiable, that is, a fool, who thinks of others' good and pleasure before her own, and believes and yields to those suggestions which stronger reason points out to wiser heads, as the mode of gaining what they want. Mariamne is young and beautiful, wise and prudent, and with such overweening pride of birth and rank, that she estimates and treats with chilling superiority all around her. If she does thus while young, what

will become of Herod and his race when a little knowledge of villainy is instilled into her by holding commerce with her fellow mortals? We shall all be trampled on by this Asmonean, and perhaps discarded, or permitted to become her satellites. Herod is in love; I might as well attempt to stop the tempest as to cool his fiery temperament. I may raise a counter storm within his bosom and so neutralise this first burst of passion. Did not Antony admire her budding beauty?—I will know more of this Princess. First I will seek her mother Alexandra, then act as occasion may require. Doris is formed for my purposes, but not for the wife of Herod: this does not concern me, that does, and therefore she shall, if I can compass it, remain so."

She attired herself and went to Alexandra. Salome with consummate art informed her that she came by her brother's order to console with her, and to ascertain if there was any thing in which either of them could serve her. She gradually brought the conversation to the health, pursuits, and expected visit of her son to Idu-

mæa; the anxiety she felt concerning his future establishment in Jerusalem, as well as for the welfare of Mariamne. Of the latter she spoke as being a lovely child, over whom not only Alexandra must anxiously watch, but for whom all those as sincerely devoted as herself and her brother, must think with the deepest interest. She continued—

"My parents ever spoke of her and Aristobulus as of beings for whom they were ready to sacrifice all they possessed, and even their lives: it has ever been a source of deep regret to my mother and to us all, that we have been from circumstances prevented continuing the service which we were accustomed to pay; that accidental separation has far from weakened our attachment, and as a proof, I have hastily sought you, that I might make known some information which has reached me through a captain who conducted the ship in which Antony sailed. This man affirmed to me, as being your friend, that he had warmly praised your daughter's beauty, and spoke of coming to Jerusalem. We know his power, and we know his lawless

violence when his vicious pleasures are to be gratified, so prepare to oppose the danger which threatens you. Did Antony ever speak of Mariamne when he saw her here? Had he much converse with her though a child? Is she aware of his great admiration of her?"

Salome was silent. Alexandra cunning, yet weak, violent, and vacillating, and ever considering herself, before even her children, though half suspecting some sinister intention, said, that "Antony admired Mariamne, was oftener at the palace than she liked, and once, in sport, told her that she was more beautiful than the Paphian Queen, and he would have the goddess' statue taken down, give her the isle of Cythera, proclaim her worship, and be first among the adorers at her shrine. The simple child smiled at him, and innocently replied, 'I should like to have an island of my own and be a queen, and see all my subjects love me; so you have only to fulfil your promise.' He vowed to keep his word. We know what strange impressions slight things sometimes make on men. Your intelligence makes me apprehend that Antony

has laid some stress on the unmeaning answer of my child." Salome asked with a voice of concern, "Has she ever spoken of Antony since he departed, or referred to his wanton speech?"

"Once, soon after, she jocularly referred to the incident; of late I have heard her only say that he looked noble, and had more winning manners than our Rabbis: but she detests the very name of Gentile, and looks on such an idolater as Antony with horror."

"That is natural. I wish for your permission to renew the friendship I ever bore her. When you next go to Hyrcanus palace, may I accompany you?"

"Salome your advice and affection will be most valuable. Should you hear more of that lawless chieftain's praises, for friendship's sake make them known to me immediately; accept my thanks for coming so quickly.—You can, I perceive, enter into an anxious mother's feelings."

Salome returned home with malicious joy, and armed with more weapons than she had hoped to obtain against the peace of Mariamne. Her first wish was to converse with

Herod, but he had been called away on some affair of consequence. In the intervening time Alexandra had taken her to the palace, and left her with Mariamne.—She expressed her surprise and admiration to Alexandra in the warmest terms; but when alone her jealous vengeance knew no restraint.

"So this Asmonean is as I thought, more proud than Satan, and so lovely that she might be a fallen angel: her beauty shall be the means of punishing her pride. She dared to keep me standing for more than a minute's space—She, a child —one whose dignity could be crumbled to ruin by my brother; and this woman to be his wife, and rule triumphant over his race! I know, her beauty and that cursed pride, called dignity by men, would win a host. If she becomes Herod's wife, I am no longer his confidante and equal, but his slave. She treated me with contumely; instead of bidding me a friendly welcome, and placing me in a seat of honour, she dared to keep me like a menial standing, and address me in cold and formal words. That's an insult Salome will not allow to pass unpunished. I

will revenge it. She Herod's wife.—One ready to be the queen of Cythera, and Antony's—the winning Antony's, concubine. Not, if Salome can prevent it."

Herod returned with the intelligence that Antony would soon arrive at Tyre, in his march to Asia. Salome availed herself of the first opportunity of conferring with him. She met him with more than usual tenderness; and, on observing him carefully adorned, enquired the reason. On learning that he was on his way to the palace, she embraced him; and, with gentleness, besought him to reflect more calmly on what he seemed so eager to accomplish, and to think of Doris, whose attachment and love were all he could desire.

Herod, over whom Salome exercised considerable influence, calmed by her apparent concern for his welfare, and the gentleness of her manner, besought her not to be apprehensive for the peace of Doris, nor mistrustful of the woman to whom he wished to unite himself. To this she replied, with tears,—

"How can I feel ought but deep anxiety and

great unhappiness, when my brother, to whom I owe so much, is on the eve of taking to his bosom a woman, by whose beauty alone he has been captivated, but of whose affections and character he knows so little;"

"Of her affections, Salome, there is nothing to learn, excepting that she adores her brother, and reveres Hyrcanus. She has had no contact with men, save a few old grizzled rabbis. Her character is extolled in Jerusalem as most kind and noble: her attendants too perform their service with that readiness which shews how they esteem her. All this added to her surpassing beauty, makes me most anxious to wed her, if she will but consent."

Salome, after some hesitation, in a kind and enquiring voice, asked him;

"Did Antony ever see her? Did he ever admire her? Is he coming to Tyre? Do you know if she remembers Antony? Herod, before you suffer your passion to hurry you away, know more; for be assured, that if the Triumvir is your rival, you have only to expect what you cannot bear,—disappointment and wounded pride."

Herod, with animation, answered,

" The very name of an heathen is hateful to her: moreover she has not seen this formidable rival, who exists only in your imagination, for years, and perhaps has forgotten all concerning him but his name."

Salome, feigning tears, looked at him, then said with considerable emphasis,—

" My affection for you induced me to see Alexandra, who told me, in confidence, that Antony had admired her, and said some things to her which gave her more than common pleasure: so do not depend too much on his being a heathen ruler."

" She was a child, Salome, and might have been pleased at the notice of so renowned a man as Antony, but nothing more."

" Her knowledge of the Law, and of the sacred doctrines of her faith, were well known by her in common with her people, and yet she felt no disgust, but even pleasure, at this heathen's amorous speeches,—at least, so her mother told me."

" Amorous speeches!—Her mother's fear of

Antony has conjured up these idle thoughts. What did he say?"

"More than he ought; and in so captivating a manner, that they have not been forgotten."

"Not forgotten!—Perhaps remembered to be laughed at. But what were these speeches so well calculated to leave a deep impression on a woman's mind?"

"Since, Herod, you are bent on marrying Mariamne, I condemn myself for permitting my sisterly affection to carry me so far. We will say no more. She was a child when it occurred; and if she was not wise, it was no more than what is common."

He assumed a more decided look and manner, then exclaimed,—

"Salome, she has been injuriously spoken of by her mother. I see that her apprehensions have made her attach consequence to circumstances which would have been forgotten, if fear had not existed. I will marry Mariamne come what may, and thus unite myself to the Asmonean race, and so——"

"What, Herod, marry the woman who was

pleased when promised that her image should be placed where the statue of Venus stands; and at being made the queen of love, with Antony for her idolater?"

"The tale is false, and invented for some cursed end. Salome, Alexandra has deceived you."

"If so, let Herod marry one who now speaks of Antony—of the *winning* Antony; of him who proposed to make her a heathen goddess—a queen—and higher yet—*his concubine*. Brother, let not your noble blood be soiled by such foul contact. Now I have done a sister's duty.—Go; and flame forth your love for one who waits for Antony to come and fulfil all his promises."

"She may remember Antony. He may have made that offer; for it accords with his nature, and his usual conduct: but I do not credit her pleasing remembrance of such things. I will see her, and soon discover if Antony's arrival is looked for with pleasure, and soon know if she will accept of Herod. The very thought that she may love Antony, fires me with tenfold desire to be hers. I will hasten to the palace. Yet, thanks Salome for this proof of your affection."

He departed, leaving Salome disappointed and angry. She was convinced that her attempts to prevent his marriage would prove fruitless, and began to vibrate between two lines of conduct,—the one to recal all she had said, conscious, from a knowledge of her brother's character, that the impression would never be effaced while Antony lived; and endeavour, by every means, to gain the confidence of Mariamne, and thus obtain materials wherewith to work her ruin: the other, to rouse the suspicions of her brother, and endeavour to call the attention of Antony towards the woman whom she had marked for her victim. While pondering on which of these infernal schemes she should adopt, she perceived, that both of them could be pursued; and, therefore, resolved to cultivate the friendship of Alexandra, and, at the same time, seek for a fit person to communicate the account of the transcendent beauty of Mariamne to Antony, and her recollection of his winning address. While this Erynnis was plotting her brother's misery, and Mariamne's ruin, Doris, with her infant son, entered her

apartment, and poured out her lamentation to her supposed friend :—

" I have watched him to the palace. Pharibel, my attendant's sister, who waits on Mariamne, has told her, that the Princess speaks of him in terms of warm admiration. Oh, Salome, I am undone; and my child will be cast away like another Ishmael; and this Asmonean first rob me of my Herod's love, and then thrust me forth to be a mark for every scornful enemy to jeer at. She is young, beautiful, of royal pedegree, and proud,—I have only the love of a devoted wife to weigh against such numberless attractions; and that, with men, will weigh but little—perchance enough to gain their pity. Tell me, Salome, what shall I do to save my child and myself from such misery? She will not suffer him to take advantage of our law, and retain me as his wife. She will stipulate for my being repudiated—driven from him. Perhaps she will not yield to him until I am forced to become some other's wife. Wife! did I say? No; some other's woman. For he cannot, by the Jewish law, divorce me but for

being an adulteress; that I will never be. So if he attempts to unite me to some other, I will seek refuge in death, rather than make my husband guilty of such a crime, which would be, if without the first cause, he should put me away and join me to another, since he would be the cause, and so (like the accessory of crime) guilty."

Salome did not expect to see grief as violent from one so gentle, and apparently so little susceptible; it proved Doris love for Herod, and seemed to point her out as an engine wherewith to wreak her vengeance on the unoffending Princess. She embraced her, wept with her, consoled her, and enquired if she knew any thing of Mariamne. Doris knew nothing more than was publicly reported, and received the intelligence of Antony's admiration with eagerness, and as the only hope remaining which might deter her husband from marrying her.

Salome had always looked on Doris as a weak and simple woman who was to be used for any purposes she wished: finding that her spirit and her fears were roused, she artfully worked on

them still more, then proposed to her, that "information should be given to Antony, not only of Mariamne's beauty, but of Herod's love."

Scarcely had the words passed Salome's lips than Doris exclaimed—

"Oh no, say nothing of his love, for the remorseless Antony would cut him off, and then I should be my husband's murderer. Let my child perish, and let me be abandoned and forgotten, but for mercy's sake place not Herod in any danger. Were he to meet with evil at my hands it would kill me. Think Salome of some other scheme to save me."

She thought for a moment, then asked—

"Is there not a captain in the guard who will go with Herod when he attends the Court of the Triumvir, and who once served in his train?"

"Yes, there is one Aulenus, who speaks much of Antony, and of those about his person; he will doubtless go to Tyre if Herod goes. But what of him? He looks a dark browed dangerous man."

"Is he attached to Herod?"

"Greatly, for he saved him from death, and

has advanced him; though I think he would rather serve with Antony because he often speaks of him."

"Enough, Doris, leave the affair with me, and I will try and save us both from the rule of this proud Asmonean."

Salome curbed her violence until she was alone, then vented bitter sarcasms on the gentle Doris, and smiled with contempt at her not desiring to resent her husband's desertion. She at the same time discovered that her high principles and love for Herod would never allow her to participate in any plan which, though it might destroy Mariamne, would endanger him.

Although Herod had treated lightly the information given him by his sister, the impression made on his mind was quite as strong as she expected. He conversed on affairs of importance with Hyrcanus, and learnt that he was far from being desirous of seeing Antony at Jerusalem, and even hinted at removing Mariamne if he came. The expression of this intention was to Herod some confirmation of what he had heard, and tended to excite suspicion of her

being more interested for Antony than was advantageous to his views.

The connection that had previously existed between Herod's father and the Asmonean family permitted him to hold some intercourse with Mariamne. When he told her of the Triumvir's near approach, and of the expectation entertained of his visiting Jerusalem, he observed her with considerable solicitude, but did not perceive the most transient indication of pleasure appear on her brow. He was too seriously affected to be contented with so indefinite a solution of the doubt which had almost unconsciously stolen into his mind, and so pursued his purpose.

"Do you remember this man, whose fame has spread far and wide, whose power is almost without limits, and whose beauty and address charm and win all with whom he communicates?"

"My recollection of him is faint, but my knowledge of him does not make me estimate him as others do."

"Has the protection shewn by him to your people excited feelings of gratitude and admiration?"

She looked at Herod with an expression composed of surprise and some mistrust, then, as it were, remembering, answered—

"The Roman has forced on us his protection; perhaps Judæa would be more powerful and more tranquil under the exclusive dominion of her Princes and her holy laws. The base idolatry of the Roman has made me think Jerusalem polluted with their presence."

"Some of them have offered sacrifice in the temple, and shewn respect to your sacred institutions."

"Yes, and they would bow the knee and offer worship and sacrifice to an hundred shrines, from their Jupiter to the rude mis-shapen reptile of a foul Egyptian conjuror; it is a subject on which I feel most deeply. I have seen your sister, pray greet her from me—when do you return to Idumæa?"

Herod had watched the indignation which fired Mariamne's bosom, and saw that she not only hated their dominion over them, but was zealous against them as Heathens, with whom no intercourse should be held. His admiration of her noble spirit added to his increasing love,

and removed the doubts that had perplexed him. He replied,

" The delight I have in staying here has been so much increased by the renewal of my attachment to your house, and by the service of your temple, that I cannot say when I shall return to Idumæa. Even if you were to command me to depart I question if I could obey you."

He accompanied these words with an intense animated and enquiring look, which Mariamne could not meet; she directed her attention to some trivial object, and did not reply. His ardent spirit being ignited, he continued—

" Will you, beauteous Mariamne, reverse the order, and bid me stay?"

She turned towards him, and while her crimsoned cheek and expressive eye told that she guessed his meaning, said,

" I have neither the will nor power to bid you go or stay—the Governor of Galilee will not even heed our Sanhedrin. It must be some heathen chieftain, who can and would enforce his order, that must command you, not a young and inexperienced woman."

" I would have obeyed your Sanhedrin if all had been as just as your Prince and Sameas, but I could not yield myself a sacrifice to an unjust faction, for protecting my people and punishing the most cruel murderers and plunderers."

" Was that the truth ?"

" Indeed it was: I ordered a leader of ferocious banditti and some of his associates to be tried by military law, for slaying a priest and offering horrid violence to his family; the Sanhedrin summoned me, I came as befitted my rank and innocence, and heard a cry for my condemnation; if Hyrcanus had not adjourned the council, I might have been put to death for protecting your priesthood. I trust, Mariamne, that Aristobulus will hereafter quell these dangerous divisions, and so strengthen your people."

She smiled her thanks and said,

" I hope so too; and wish that every governor would protect his people as actively as you do."

" The Roman, with all his power, could not enforce such ready obedience from Herod as Mariamne can; I could rebel for sport against

even Antony, but Mariamne holds me in thraldom, and I own myself her willing slave."

She rejoined with some agitation—

"These are strange expressions, I know not how to interpret them—I have no controul over a young and ambitious warrior."

Herod, curbing his ardent feelings, reverently continued,

"One, whose greatest ambition is to be united to the Asmonean race, and, like his forefathers, pass his days in serving them. Such, beauteous beloved Mariamne, would be the summit of my glory."

She arose, blushing and embarrassed, to depart. Again he spoke, as he gently took her hand and interposed between her and the entrance—

"Princess, I am serious; only one question will I ask, then leave you to tell Hyrcanus that I have declared my love for you—has Antony or any other man a prior claim to your affection?"

She raised her eyes, their modest softened look was encreased by the tear that trembled on her eye-lid, and fell on Herod's hand.

"No one, not even Herod, has a claim on my

affection. I have heard much of you, and must know more before we meet again."

She disengaged her hand and left him.

He watched her receding form as she hurried with hasty and uneven steps from the long and narrow gallery, then thus communed with himself:

" She think of Antony — no, she spurns him, and looks kindly on me—such nobility of spirit, wisdom, and surpassing beauty were enough to satiate even my restless soul, though it were not added to the influence her alliance would give me. She would calm down my fiery spirit, and make me fit for Heaven ; I cannot look on her and not feel that I am her inferior in all that is truly good and great : her dignity seems not of earth but of some superhuman creature. Antony shewed his discernment when he proposed to make a goddess of her.—He possess such a celestial gift—he, a Heathen, a half-witted besotted fool, falling into the snares of that Egyptian wanton, who will some day get another paramour who can pay higher for her favours ; and then, alas, poor Antony ! She think him winning—why she hates him, and

thinks his presence pollution, and his protection insult. Profound Salome—she will overtop you, and you can lead the soft and kind-hearted Doris.——I will marry her, but not till Antony is far away.—I must now return and wait for news from Tyre."

Whatever might have been the apprehensions of Herod his countenance did not pourtray them. His eyes sparkled and his cheeks were flushed as if joy was revelling in his mind. He rode quickly along, and entered his abode with smiles of pleasure playing on his lips. He went to his private apartment and saw Doris sitting on the ground with sackcloth on her head, and her eyes bathed in tears: he started and closed the door. She rose from the ground, and kneeling at his feet, with an humble and supplicating voice besought him—

" Do not desert me—I have ever loved and honoured you, and thought my chief happiness was in pleasing and obeying you. Oh! that I had heard before of your visiting this Asmonean; now it is too late, and I am undone, for your eye was beaming with that pleasure which I once watched for,

and your cheek was flushed as it is wont to be when success has crowned your enterprise. She has I see accepted you, and I am to be repudiated and scorned—Herod, send me not away from you, I will be your slave, and when toil and sickness oppress you, be, as I have ever been, your nurse. I will ask no honour from you; I will not even seek for one smile, so that I am still with you—O Herod, cast not your once loved Doris from you!"

She wept. Herod raised her from the ground, and though angry at her having discovered his secret, he stifled it, and said—

"Doris, Mariamne has not accepted me—were I for our mutual safety and welfare to wed her, why should I repudiate you? Does not our law permit me to have more wives than one?—Our patriarchs, prophets, kings and priests, from the days of Abraham, have had and loved more wives than one; no prophet ever rebuked them for their polygamy, or enumerated it among the sins of Israel; what was not sin then can never be converted into it: so do not fear, I will yet love Doris were Mariamne to become my bride."

She sorrowfully, yet with some animation, replied;

"Your words bestow but little comfort; I cannot comprehend how men can love more than one—if they aver they can, they never felt that heavenly fire, one of the last sad remnants of our primæval state. If man can feel a touch of love save for one, and one alone, he does not love, but is descending to the state of the beasts that prowl or graze: I cannot brook the division of such love with even Mariamne—yet I cannot leave you and live."

Again she sunk at his feet, and implored him with bitter tears, and bade him heed lest ambition should lead him on until he fell to be a bye-word to those he had upheld.

At first Herod appeared affected at her appeal, but the fatal passion was too deeply implanted, and her last words brought a pageant of thrones and wealth and glory across his vivid imagination, he stamped and furiously exclaimed—

"Let me hear no more of this puling guile—Is it not the custom of your nation, (and that sanctioned by your God through all the kings and pro-

phets of your people) for men to have more than one wife? So it is forbidden to repudiate one to take another, therefore you will retain your rank and honour, and, unless you destroy it, an equal share of my affection—you forsooth would have it all. The best proof of love is forbearance, and a total disregard of self; it is nourished by seeing the beloved object happy, prosperous, and enjoying pleasure, but you would have me go back to Idumæa, live like some water-blooded slave, and love you, and play with babies—By Jove, Herod was not born for such domestic pleasures — Mariamne will raise your rustic thoughts, and teach you how to value Herod, and when you have learnt the lesson he may love you as he did."

He left her weeping and overwhelmed with grief and fear, and sent to Hyrcanus to claim an audience of him.

His interview was brief and conclusive, for Hyrcanus accepted with satisfaction the proposition of Herod; though, at the same time, he expressed (forgetful of his office) a hope that no other woman would have the title of his wife,

and observed that the acceptance must come from Mariamne, sanctioned by her mother and Aristobulus. Herod, without hesitation, told him, that no one could or should share that name with an Asmonean princess, and requested permission to see Mariamne that he might know if she would permit him to propound the matter to Alexandra.

Hyrcanus went to her, and prepared her for the interview. She returned, led by the High Priest, who soon retired.

The sight of Mariamne leaning on Hyrcanus arm, with looks cast down, and which she gently raised on entering the room, banished every thought from Herod's mind, and left admiration and love to usurp dominion over him. His fervid nature responded to the glowing passion, and he became enamoured of the young and lovely princess, forgetful of all the advantages which he had calculated would accrue to him from the alliance. Scarcely had Hyrcanus left them when he approached her. She had risen when the Prince retired, and was leaning on the ivory seat of state which was near. With an

ardent, yet agitated look, and with an altered voice he spoke as he raised her unresisting hand.

" Mariamne, I love you; it is with fear I tell you so: but Hyrcanus favours my hopes, or it seems, from what I feel, that my courage would have failed me.—Have I your permission to tell your mother so?—You are silent—Nay, answer me.—You will not scorn me, though I am not a crowned king."

A tear fell from her eye, and he again urged his suit—

" Speak to me Mariamne; you are holding me between earth and heaven, an agony I cannot endure; raise me to the summit of my wishes, or drop me to the gulph of ——"

She quickly raised her swimming eyes, which assumed an expression that awed even her daring suitor, and said;

" If you expect me to listen to you, be not profane, nor offend me by language that lead me to fear your violence, rather than credit the sudden love you have expressed for me."

" Forgive me, Mariamne, if the violence of my feelings has overcome my better reason—I love

you; and would, if you can stoop to me, marry you.—May I tell my wishes to your mother?"

She was much agitated, and continued looking on him still kneeling, at length with more firmness said;

"No; first let me learn from your own lips, if you are a firm believer in the Jewish faith."

He rose from the ground and openly replied—

"In that faith I was brought up, even in your father's house, and in it I hope to die."

"Are you united to any of the Roman chiefs, and bound to espouse their cause?"

"No, to none. I am devoted to your nation and to your family, and would shed my blood to see, in due time, Aristobulus sway the sceptre of Judæa."

At these words Mariamne's brow was brightened by a smile of mingled pride and pleasure. Herod had recovered the temporary agitation his unrestrained feelings had produced, and caught the tone, and knew the chord on which to strike, and thus continued:—

"Think not that I would court the imperious Roman but to secure the peace of Judæa, to pre-

vent their plundering, and to advance the interest of the rulers to whom my fathers have left an hereditary devotion, which has grown into an ardent love that nothing can efface, but which Mariamne may controul."

" Herod, I do not mistrust your words; but, do not your present feelings deceive you?"

" No, beauteous Princess, I may express them so that you might draw such inference, but they are so old, that they began when my heart first beat, and will continue, with my love for you, until it beats no more."

" Again I pray you to moderate your words, they are unaccustomed sounds, and displease me."

After some seconds of silence, during which she drew a deep inspiration and endeavoured to resume entire composure, she fixed her eyes on Herod and firmly said;

" It is the custom of our people, contrary to the example of our first parents, to have more than one wife.—I will not share the affections of any man with another woman, neither will I break the dread commandment of my God,

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by allowing a wife to be repudiated that I may possess alone her husband."

This declaration, pronounced with calmness and dignity, and with a look that bespoke conviction of her resolution, abashed the daring suitor, and he hesitated; and before his confused thoughts were expressed, stopped, and hesitated again.

Mariamne gazed at him with wonder, not unmixed with pride; then withdrawing her hand prepared to leave him. He attempted to detain her, but she again released her hand, and with gentleness of look, yet dignity of mien, bade him farewell, intimating that she should send for Doris.

Herod remained for some minutes as if lost; at length he started from his reverie, muttered, "Send for Doris:" then relapsing, gave way to thoughts like these—"For what? —to ask her if she likes me to marry another and a more — a most lovely—a most—a woman who has more of earthly majesty than all the mortals I ever saw. I am perplexed— she will have her way, or I shall never have her

—Doris shall consent—my path to power shall not be impeded by a woman whom I raised to be my wife.—A world would be a waste even to me without that beauteous, wonderful Asmonean—Doris shall prompt her to marry me, or she shall bitterly repent."

He left the palace and hastened to her.

Doris had remained where he had left her, with a mind full of melancholy thoughts that foreboded evil to herself and to her child. When he returned and found her in tears, his agitation was soon converted into anger, and with vehemence he ordered her to listen to his determination.

" I am resolved on having Mariamne for my wife—you must urge her to accept me."

Doris uttered a short exclamation of bitter grief, clasped her hands, and gazed on him without being able to articulate. His unrestrained passions were all loose, and each ready to burst forth with unbridled fury as affected by the least exciting circumstance or word. The stare, the mute anguish of his wife, who stood with looks rivetted on him, instead of

calming the moral tempest increased its fury, and with flashing eyes and thrilling voice he poured forth a volume of wrath against this unoffending woman.

" Curses on your puling folly—did you hear the order that I gave—Urge, prompt, persuade Mariamne to marry me—If you hesitate I will bury you in the dungeons of Massada, and send your son to be an Egyptian or a Roman priest—I raised you to be my wife, and now with base ingratitude you try to thwart my views—and with unreasonable selfishness to keep me merely to waste away with you—This you call love and duty—I will hate you, and send you disgraced and repudiated to your home, unless you forward the views I have for your own and my well doing. Begone and obey me, or you shall feel the effects of my justly excited anger."

She, trembling and terrified, tottered to the door, keeping her eyes towards him as if fascinated by his envenomed look—His fury burst forth again, and he repeated his mandate in a loud and hollow voice, and strode towards her—She uttered a cry of terror and sunk upon her

knee, and could only in half stifled accents articulate;

"I will—yes I will, but make not my child a heathen."

"If she refuses me I will, and bury you."

His passion being somewhat exhausted, he turned away and paced the room, which gave the affrighted Doris an opportunity of escaping. As she dreaded to encounter Herod alone, she sent immediately for Salome, from whom she hoped to receive both consolation and advice.

The attendant who went for her had overheard the words and anger of Herod, and communicated the information when delivering the summons. Salome quickly perceived that the objection must have originated with Mariamne, and therefore instead of complying with Doris request, immediately proceeded to Alexandra. She affected the deepest concern for her interests and the welfare of her daughter, renewed the conversation respecting Antony, and endeavoured to discover if her weakness and vanity instigated her to desire that Mariamne should become connected with him; not obtaining the

knowledge she desired, she spoke of Herod's repeated visits to Hyrcanus, and insinuated that he might have seen Mariamne. Alexandra hastily remarked;

"Antony would cut him off were he to discover that Herod was his rival. I must inquire more into this matter, and recal Mariamne from Hyrcanus Palace—Pray, Salome, learn if you can, whether any thing has transpired between your brother and Mariamne. If so, it will be offensive to Antony if she were affianced without his approbation."

Salome knew the duplicity of Alexandra, and having received the thought that Herod might be cut off by Antony, she promised to fulfil her wishes, and soon after went to Doris.

The afflicted wife received her, as the forlorn and miserable welcome their only friend. She related what had passed between her and Herod, and with bursting heart told her of his threat. Salome, reckless of another's feelings, immediately pursued her purpose, and nearly drove the wretched Doris to despair by adjuring her not to comply with Herod's command, lest

it should turn to his own destruction, as Antony would cut him off when informed that he thwarted his wish to possess Mariamne. She wrung her hands, beat her bosom, threw herself on the ground, and poured ashes on her head as she cried out in anguish of heart—

" The Lord hath covered me with a cloud in his anger, and hath not remembered his footstool in the day of his wrath—mine eyes do fail me, and I cannot see an escape from the snare—all that pass by will clap their hands at me, they will hiss and wag their head, and cry, she is cast forth like Hagar."

She covered her head and bewailed so bitterly, that even the hardened Salome felt some passing compunction, and did not disturb the vehemence of her grief. After some time the mourner placed her hands above her head and exclaimed,

" Which way shall I turn, O Thou, who dost not willingly afflict the children of men, direct me. Shall I obey my husband and so hurry him to destruction, or shall I disobey him, so that in his anger he may cast me out a scoff and a

scorn, and make my child a heathen priest—O shew me a way of escape."—Again she vented her griefs, and, covering herself, sat bemoaning.

At length Salome raised her, and embracing her, said;

" You cannot urge my brother to dare the vengeance of the jealous Antony, so Doris you must disobey him, and exert yourself with me to make Mariamne refuse him, and if that is impossible, to delay their union. Be guided by me, array yourself, and if Herod meets you at least attempt to be cheerful, and wait until I have seen Aulenus."

Doris yielded to her entreaties, and went away to change her mourning apparel. Salome remained meditating, then determined on endeavouring to obtain Alexandra as an ally.

She rose early and went to her. On entering the apartment she cast her head-dress on the ground, and in accents of grief thus accosted her—

" Princess of Israel, your words respecting Antony dwelt on my mind, and while deep sleep overcame me, I saw my brother all bathed in

blood while an eagle was tearing out his heart; a dove fluttered over the ravenous bird and vainly sought to scare it away; though our people too often confide in such visions of the night, I cannot be mistaken in this—your words are fraught with truth, if Herod crosses the Triumvir in his wish, he will eagle-like prey upon his victim. Be not angry with your friend if I tell you, that my brother has won on the gentle Mariamne, who would in vain attempt to drive the murderer from his prey. I have no influence over him; but you can induce Mariamne either to reject him, or at least postpone their union: unless you assist me in this, the headlong impetuous Herod will be destroyed, and I left miserable."

Alexandra was astonished at the communication, and at first seemed angry that her daughter had not told her of Herod's advances, but dissembling, besought Salome to moderate her affliction, and at the same time asked if she knew that Mariamne had given him any conditional promise. Salome told her that he had not denied it to Doris, and therefore she concluded

that either Hyrcanus or her brother would soon formally consult her. She then continued;

"You will not sanction an Asmonean Princess only sharing his love—surely you will instigate Mariamne to reject such proposal, and thus my brother will be saved from the danger that threatens him."

She watched the countenance of Alexandra, but perceived no surprise, but a perplexed look mingled with anxiety; at length she replied—

"Methinks Herod's ambition has led him to soar full high: I know his devotion to our family and his impetuous nature, therefore I can make every allowance for the step he has taken; but Salome—my child shall never merely participate in his love, if she should ever raise him by allying him to the princes of Israel; I thank you for your advice, but in this instance it was premature—I shall see Mariamne."

Salome saw that part of her purpose was gained, but she did not know if Alexandra favoured in her heart the proposals of Herod, or desired that she should connect herself with the powerful Roman, so she again thus endeavoured to learn.

" Even if no obstacles existed to prevent Mariamne from raising Herod, surely the Princess would never think of him while able to command the mighty Antony, for an alliance with him would strengthen Hyrcanus and Aristobulus power."

Alexandra perceived the drift of the enquiry, and gave so unformed and contradictory an answer that left her still in doubt, then expressed a wish to see Mariamne, and so terminated their conference.

Salome left in ignorance of her real sentiments, was at a loss how to proceed, and returned thoughtful and dissatisfied.

Alexandra, though of Asmonean blood, possessed none of the noble qualities which adorned even the worst of that celebrated race. Her selfishness and disregard of principle led her to wish for an alliance with Antony, since his power and wealth would enable her to procure the means of self gratification. Her cunning taught her that the protection of the Triumvir would support Aristobulus, and perhaps extend his dominion. On the other hand she was aware of

her daughter's antipathy to the Romans, and of Aristobulus jealousy of their interference, and therefore anticipated almost insurmountable obstacles to the selfish wishes that were uppermost in her mind.

She learnt from Mariamne that Herod had not been accepted, and that she was not desirous of seeing him again; yet she admitted to her mother that her opinions and feelings were favourably inclined towards him. On her referring to Antony, Mariamne expressed surprise and indignation, and declared that death would be preferable to his alliance, even if Octavia had been dead, and asked her mother if she would have the Asmonean race degraded by connection with a base Idolater, while her forefathers had been High Priests of Israel, and to which great office her only brother would succeed. Her mother knew too well the resolution and principles of her daughter not to be certain that to combat them would be to strengthen her determination, and therefore resolved to wait and follow the course most likely to terminate in her own advantage.

Salome found an early opportunity of conversing with her brother, and under the mask of affection and friendship made known to him, as certain intelligence, the suggestion mentioned by Alexandra, and besought him, for the sake of his family as well of himself, to be at least cautious in his intercourse with Mariamne, as the discovery might terminate his hopes and his life. While Herod scorned the danger, his countenance evinced so much surprise, that his crafty monitor perceived, by making him think his ambitious schemes were in jeopardy, or the love of Mariamne likely to be claimed by another, she had, at least for a time, the master key to his mind. He endeavoured to laugh at her apprehensions, but the attempt only more clearly convinced her, that his dread of the Triumvir depriving him of her would render him tractable. She quitted his apartment and hastened to give instructions to Doris, for whom Mariamne had sent.

She enforced the necessity, for her husband's sake, of her not obeying his order, she exaggerated his danger, and to inspire her with more

courage, communicated her suspicion of Alexandra's desire that she should become either the wife or the mistress of Antony.

The gentle Doris endeavoured to compose her mind, and to pursue the course Salome had marked out.

Mariamne received her in her private room, and after kindly, almost affectionately, greeting her, said;

"You will forgive my requesting you to come to me, since I should have transgressed Hyrcanus order had I left the palace, moreover it would have been impossible for me to have gone to Herod's abode."

Here she blushed and became somewhat agitated, but recovering herself, continued in a manner which was evidently the effect of effort.

"You are the wife of Herod, and I hear deserving of his warmest love. The custom, alas, an evil one, of our country permits men to have many wives held in equal honour, and entitled to equal privileges. Availing himself of this practice, Herod has sought my hand."

Again she paused, then taking the hand of Doris continued;

"I cannot share with another the love of any man, and therefore gave him no decided answer, for I will own that his gallant bearing, his devotion to our people and our race, have made me, not love—be not agitated Doris—but feel deeply interested for him. I have no friend on whom I could rely, and therefore determined to learn from your own lips the degree of connection you really stand in to him, and if your love is such that you cannot separate from him."

Doris, struck with the dignity, openness, and kindness of manner of the young Princess, after a little hesitation attempted to reply, but tears prevented her; at length, in a tone almost of supplication, she said;

"He is indeed my husband both by the laws of God and man—to part from him would destroy me—yet I dread"—

"What is it that you dread? Doris, believe me sincere and you shall have no cause to repent your confidence in me."

" I would confide in you, but what I have learnt may not be true."

" If it should prove untrue, it will not produce either good or evil, if true, you may enable me to avoid some impending danger."

Doris was silent but continued weeping, and was again urged to make known the danger she apprehended, at length with evident reluctance and fear she told her—

" Was Antony to hear that Herod loved you, we both should lose him, and my child become a wanderer on the earth."

Mariamne started from her seat and exclaimed;

" The vile Idolater, the besotted Antony—but what of him? I know him not—what would you infer? I beseech you tell me—whence did you obtain this—this false intelligence?"

Doris, rendered still more timid by Mariamne's indignant exclamations, replied confusedly;

" I was told so—it is said he remembers you, and is coming here."

Mariamne listened to her words, then with

more vehemence exclaimed, as she sunk on her knee;

" O God, shall the Heathen again come into thine inheritance, shall they defile thy holy temple, lay Jerusalem in ruins, and carry captive the daughters of their Princes? Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, O my God I trust in thee; let me not be brought to shame, let not mine enemies triumph over me."

She arose, and looking on Doris emphatically said;

" Although Octavia were gone, I would not for a thousand empires be the base, the degraded, image-worshipping Antony's wife. The curse of heaven would be on me, and I should be stricken with some foul leprosy or more horrid disease. O tell me Doris, where you learnt this dreadful tale, I intreat you tell me."

She told her that her mother had informed Salome, then with still bitterer tears continued;

" If Herod were to be your husband I am repudiated, and my child undone.—If the vile Roman comes, then Herod dies, or I am doomed to the dungeons of Massada, and my child to be

more than slain—made an Heathen Priest.—I am in a great strait, O Lord, let me be in thy hand for thy mercies are great."

She sat on the ground, and covering her head wept aloud.

Mariamne, deeply affected, after a short interval again sought for more information.

" I will be faithful and secret, Doris, but tell me, why do you anticipate such dreadful evils?"

Doris in great affliction replied—

" Have mercy on thine handmaid and I will be grateful."

" Speak, tell me;" said the astonished Princess.

Doris looked on her and said—

" Herod loves you, and well he may, beauteous maiden—he made me vow that I would urge you to marry him, and threatened if I did not to bury me at Massada, and send my son to Egypt. And now comes Antony to kill him if he does—woe, woe!"

Mariamne paced the room, then turning to the weeping Doris said;

" And this is Herod.—O man when will you

appreciate a woman's love, the thing you spurn, but as far above you in any true affection as the soul is superior to the rotting body."

She approached her, embraced her, and said;

"I will not rob you of your husband's love if I can help it—I would not condescend to share it with you—yet how to protect myself from Antony I know not."

She started at the shadow of a man, coming from behind her, cast by the pale moonbeam; she turned suddenly and found Hyrcanus by her side. He had entered the room unperceived, and heard much of what had passed between them. The natural calmness of his manner enabled him to first salute the affrighted Doris, and then gently say—

"What I have accidentally heard is a matter of great import, and should not be made publicly known: I mean the intended visit of the Triumvir."

Then he addressed them both;

"Whatever concerns your welfare is of the deepest interest to us. I am proud of, but not surprised at the noble sentiments which so be-

come an Asmonean Princess; and not less so at the true affection of Doris for her noble husband. We will think more of this affair. Mariamne, before you retire I would fain converse with you."

Doris soon left them. Hyrcanus with great kindness told her that, Herod had informed him he was desirous of uniting himself more closely to their race by becoming her husband, and was then with Alexandra. The High Priest spoke favourably of Herod, and thus urged his suit;

" Antigonus still lives; before many days have gone by I shall be gathered unto my fathers; then, if our race has not some captain skilful with the sword and the bow, your brother will fall into the snares of the wicked, our race will be destroyed like the stubble that is scattered and passeth away. The factious and the wicked will combine and hope by rebellion to obtain the spoil of the city. We know how watchful the Heathen are, and how ready to make the stubbornness and tumults of our people a pretext for sending their rapacious captains

and licentious legions to our country. Should they come to quell the troubles, the courage and jealousy of the people will make them resist—then devastation and misery will revel here, and the city be defiled as the place of Tophet. But if an Herod, skilful in war, sage in counsel, devoted to our race, and in favour with the Roman, is ready to support Aristobulus, our race will not be swept away, but may again flourish, and still perform the sacrifices of the God of Israel. Much depends on your decision—remember I will not answer for the Triumvir's conduct—your beauty may induce him to attempt to carry you away, when you would fall a victim to Cleopatra's vengeance."

He paused as if expecting some reply, but Mariamne stood with her eyes fixed on the ground, as if too many alarming thoughts crowded into her mind to permit her to express herself.

Hyrcanus paced the room, then bade her kneel and receive her accustomed blessing; he then left her to arrange her perplexing thoughts.

It was long before her bewildered mind resumed its usual track; she then burst into tears and exclaimed—

"What the fate of Israel almost dependant on my accepting Herod—Oh that my father, like another Jephthah, had doomed me by a vow to a state like hers. Must I share his love with another, or link myself with a base wretch like Antony, wallowing in idolatry and guilty love, to be the victim of his subtle heartless paramour? The bitter draught of Marah is mingled with gall and given me to drink, for if I were, for Israel's sake, to do the thing I loathe, share Herod's love, if such it can be called, with Doris, then the accursed Heathen cuts him off, and Israel falls—my brother would be destroyed amid rival factions, my race extinguished, and our temple defiled by legions of image worshippers stained with my people's blood.—Is there no mode of escape?"

She cast up her eyes to heaven and cried—

"Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me!"

She paused again, and seemed to be more collected, then said;

"If I cannot escape I will affiance myself to Herod, under the promise of secrecy, then may I save my people from all the horrors of rebellion, screen myself from Antony, and have time to take advantage of any circumstances that Providence may ordain. I will pray and sleep, and prepare to fulfil my intention."

She sought her couch and passed some hours in oblivion.

CHAPTER III.

SALOME, eager to learn from Doris all that had transpired during the interview with Mariamne, waited her arrival. When she heard that she had poured out her whole heart, no expression either of approbation or disapprobation escaped her lips, though she quickly perceived that more had been done towards forwarding her views than she could have attained by any indirect means. After instructing her how to carry herself towards Herod, she left her, to reflect on the manner in which she should direct Aulenus to report to Antony the transcendant beauty of Mariamne.

On the following morning Herod went to the palace, and after an interview with Hyrcanus, was taken by him to the Princess.

He found her pale, melancholy, and composed, she received him with kindness, but not with marked pleasure. She seated herself and waited for him to tell her the purport of his visit. He walked several times across the apartment, then suddenly stopping, knelt quickly and took her hand,—she calmly withdrew it and said;

" Herod, in that posture I cannot hold communication with you, rise, subdue the agitation which I see affects you, and then remember that you are addressing a daughter of the Asmonean race, who prefers listening to reason and not to the language of love."

She pronounced these words in almost a melancholy tone, yet her manner was so blended with dignity that it insured not only obedience, but produced on the ardent suitor the effect which he could not have obtained by any effort of his own; he rose, and seating himself near her began;

" Mariamne I love you, and notwithstanding the declaration that you made when last we parted, have returned to ask your consent to

become my wife—Hyrcanus favours me, and your mother is not averse to our union."

She raised her eyes, and as a slight blush passed across her pallid face, replied;

" You must think me weak indeed to break the resolution that I made of not sharing your attachment with another, and of not permitting you to repudiate the affectionate Doris to possess me alone. I will continue to give my reasons for the line of conduct I intend to pursue, on your entering into a sacred promise of secrecy."

Herod could but ill endure the state of suspense in which he had been kept while she spoke these few words, and in a hurried voice agreed—She continued;

" Your promise must be more solemnly affirmed, and with greater composure — Your vehement feelings alarm and distress me."

He replied—" Command me, beauteous Princess, and I will obey you."

She fixed on him her melancholy eyes, and said with firmness;

" Again must I request the man who seeks

my hand to be calm in his deportment and manly in his speech? Such uncalled for vehemence is not the bulwark with which you can support the privileges of our people against the proud and stubborn Roman."

Herod blushed at the reproof and said;

"I am prepared to enter into a solemn promise of secrecy"—

She added; "And to grant Mariamne's request."

He hesitated, which caused her to remark;

"Not a moment since the vehement Herod besought me to command his obedience—now he hesitates to accord with my request."

"What is it," he asked, "that you would have me do?"

She replied in the same collected manner;

"You must swear by the name of the Most High God, to keep secret what shall transpire between us, and to grant the request I make."

He reflected for some moments, then said;

"I will enter into this solemn engagement with you, if it is not to terminate my hopes."

A gleam of satisfaction crossed her brow, she

approached him, and taking his hand, knelt, and bade him follow her example and repeat her words.

" I swear in the name of the Lord, and call on Him who liveth for ever and ever for a record upon my soul, to keep secret the engagement between us, until Mariamne shall permit me to reveal it—and to grant the request she may now make."

Her voice did not alter, and her melancholy eyes were turned towards heaven. His tongue faltered and his lips grew pale at the solemn contract which he had entered into. Still kneeling, with her right hand clasped in his, she said;

" You have sworn by the Most High, to cherish and protect the Asmonean race, to support our holy laws—to keep secret until I allow you to reveal it, and not to seek me in marriage until I permit you, *that I affiance myself to you.*"

Herod started, and would have given way to his ardent feelings, but she checked him—He embraced her, and imprinted on her yielding lips the kiss that was a mutual pledge of the

affinity in which from that hour they stood towards each other.

As silent tears fell from her eyes, Herod repeated in his heart the oath that he had taken, and then perhaps believed that he should fulfil it.

They arose, she paced the apartment for a short time, then stopping, addressed him;

"I am now your affianced wife, so by the law of God bound to you, in every duty the same as if that betrothment had been made an actual alliance. Herod, I am led to believe that the wretched heathen Antony has some desire to make me his concubine. I should prefer death to such horrid degradation, and seek from you protection,—if you love me do not risk your life, but act with caution, for I have heard that if he knew you crossed his inclination he would cut you off. You need not fear me, for I not only abhor him, but would rather fall a victim than break the seventh ordinance that was pronounced at Sinai. Alas, these are poor auspices on which an Asmonean princess should be affianced!—But to such a state is Judæa brought."

She became agitated and wept. Herod, roused

by what she had said, and inflamed with ardent love, pressed his purpose;

" My wife, my beloved Mariamne, let our espousals be declared, and become at once my bride, and then let the besotted Antony express a thought of thus carrying you away"—

The Asmonean pride burst forth, and the agitated woman with some warmth exclaimed;

" Oh! have I affianced myself to a man whose oath is forgotten in the violence of his passion, and who cannot look on danger without an idle wish to dare it—What should I feel if I were to become the cause of death to my affianced husband?"

He, much disturbed, approaching, took her hand as he said;

" Then you love me, and would not that injury should happen to me for your sake—forgive me, but I cannot govern the joy those words have excited, my beloved, my affianced wife—Your wisdom shall guide my steps. I do remember and will observe my promise—but would it not be safer to at once cut off the hopes of Antony?"

Mariamne looked on him, while a blush of indignation crossed her face;

" Hopes—he can have no hope beyond destroying me,—Hopes of an Asmonean princess being his concubine—Your estimation of your affianced bride must be poor indeed, Antony entertain hopes that I "—

Herod became alarmed at her indignant vehemence, and pressing her to him said;

" Nay, I thought but as you do, no meaning was attached to that word—my beloved Mariamne—He must be a madman to suppose that you would for a moment think of him, a heathen and an oppressor, but with abhorrence."

She looked at him, smiled, and said emphatically;

" Think of him and of every oppressor of our people in that way, and support our tottering race."

She paused, then added in a tone of solicitation;

" Cherish Doris, and, if you love me, be kind to her who lives for you.—Farewell for a time, Hyrcanus must have expected me, and I must also see my mother."

Herod embraced her and she left him. He was more overawed by her than he could have been by a thousand legions. It was some time before he recovered from his abstracted state, and said, while the blood suffused his cheeks and his voice became deep and hollow;

" She's mine—not Antony nor all the factious rulers of the Roman world can separate us—Nor should, while I have a falchion left to draw—I know the Jewish laws, and would stake an empire that she would not break them. So the beauteous Mariamne, the Asmonean princess, is my affianced wife.—When her brother Aristobulus is high priest, who will rule in Jerusalem?—Who has so great a right as she, or I may, as her husband, and so prop up their sinking race—I feel as if my love for her fills every vein, and makes me cower before her as if she were some mighty queen—no earthly monarch could flutter me half so much as this girl—She is beautiful and wise—I said scarcely a word, but seemed spell bound, and obeyed her.—Why she has extracted from me a strange oath—To keep secret our being be-

trothed, not to ask her in marriage, and to protect her race—Ah, and to cherish and love Doris—What can all this mean? She has fooled me and made me swear—No, she would not deceive me—She would be protected from Antony, and so seeks an affiance with me—Well, that's flattering enough—but not to marry—Am I to be only her body-guard? Am I to be the sworn supporter of her race, and reap no other reward than to be acknowledged, by her alone, her chosen husband? I will ask Salome—I am sworn to secrecy—I am toiled by a woman and will break the meshes, though I love her to my soul."

He went away thoughtful, though delighted, yet wondering at what had happened. Doris greeted him on his return, and endeavoured, with some success, to please him. When they were alone he tried to learn from her if any thing had transpired, she, instructed by Salome, asked him "if he had cause to be displeased with her." He caressed her, and assured her of his love if she would continue to obey him, as she had—The affectionate woman continued;

" If by obedience I could ensure your love and please you, how ready should I be to follow your commands."

" Your obedience has done both, it has made me promise to love and cherish you, and has afforded me great delight."

" Have you seen the princess?"

" Yes, Doris, and your persuasions have had their due effect and "—

He stopped, and became thoughtful—then turned the subject of their discourse to his approaching departure.

A woman fearing to lose the love of the man whom she adores, and who is united to her by the sacred bond of marriage, sees with instinctive quickness and certainty, and believes in her conclusions with more than holy faith, and then with that subtilty bestowed on them and on their creation, endeavours to rid herself of the object she thinks is robbing her.

Doris followed in the conversation which Herod introduced, instead of speaking more of Mariamne; but she concluded from the words he had used, from his so abruptly stopping,

and from what had previously passed, that the princess had accepted him, and so deceived and duped her, and that Herod's kindness arose merely from the success that had attended him. Her jealousy was excited, her fears for her child called forth, as well as the anticipation of being quickly repudiated. As soon as an opportunity offered, she communicated her fears and suspicions to Salome. Her violent passions and preconceived hatred, not only led her to pronounce Mariamne the most deceitful but the most abandoned woman; and she began to cheat herself into the belief that she was justified in whatever means she adopted to prevent her brother from marrying her, and to save her family from the thraldom of a woman so unprincipled and cunning. Such are the kind of conclusions to which prejudice, the evil passions of our nature, and a want of justness of opinion bring the mind. Let those who decide from first impressions; those who have long cherished unexamined opinions; and those who are too vain and obstinate to see the force of reason, ask themselves if it is not true.

Herod was preparing for his departure to Antioch, where he knew Antony intended to stop, that he might enjoy the air and pleasures of Daphne. Salome apprehending that he would easily induce Antony to favour his marriage with Mariamne, decided on sending Aulenus, so that he might reach the court some days before her brother.

Aulenus was a soldier not differing greatly in his disposition from his companions, but gifted by nature with superior abilities, to which he owed his rise, and by which he anticipated higher promotion. He had been distinguished in the game called war, which proves that man is the greatest enemy to man, since he was athletic, skilful, and active: like the rest of his countrymen, their preceptors the Greeks, and all semibarbarous people, he was unsparing and ferocious when victorious, and mutinous or reckless when retreating. He was quite aware that Salome intended to make him her tool, but as long as he expected personal advantage from executing her directions, he cared but little what they were, so that they did not occupy the

portion of time devoted by him to pleasure. He obeyed her summons. She thus endeavoured to prepare him for her purpose;

"Good and tried Aulenus, well do I know that the happiness of Herod is a subject near your heart; so if danger threatened him I might be certain that you would try and shield him from it,—would you not?"

He replied with a careless air;

"That would only be my duty as a soldier; your brother has advanced me, therefore I have the inclination to serve him, though my power is very limited,"

"Not so limited, Aulenus, as you suppose—have you seen Mariamne?"

"I heard of her beauty, and so went to the Temple, where she worships, for the purpose of seeing her, but she was so closely veiled that I returned no wiser than I went."

"Do you know if any of your companions have seen her?"

The soldier smiled, and replied,

"The governor of Galilee has been very often at the palace lately; and is employed on some

scheme,—at least, so we all conclude from the temper in which he is ?"

Salome, feigned concern, and said,

" Better had he been wandering, like our fathers, in the desert, than amid the snares of a wily woman.—Aulenus, I would not have you go ; but remain near him, ready to draw thy sword and slay him,—that men say not of him, a woman slew him."

The soldier looked stedfastly at her, and sternly asked,

" Has the Princess laid a plan to kill my Governor,—my general and my benefactor ?"

She paused, then said ;

" It matters but little, whether, like another Jael, she first entices, and then kills him ; or whether, like another Dalilah, she wins from him the secret of his weakness, and then delivers him over to his enemies."

" It is my duty to tell this plot to my general: and lest I should be accused of being concerned in it, for not reporting it as soon as it was known to me, I must go."

" Stop, my zealous friend, you have concluded

too hastily. Herod shall be told of your friendship and sense of duty; but listen to me,—First, will you be secret? If you consent, it may turn to your advantage; for Antony is generous, and able to reward."

He quickly answered;

"Antony, said you? The Triumvir is Herod's friend. You know my readiness to serve him, or those who are his friends; so I can readily promise what you require; having said so, you know that you can rely on me."

"Your words are true.—Antony is my brother's friend. But would Antony be his enemy who loved Cleopatra?"

The soldier laughed heartily, as he exclaimed;

"What;—Herod enamoured of that sunburnt common thing?"

"Check your coarse sallies, and think, if Antony may not love, and that her he loves may not be loved by more than the Triumvir."

"I see the mystery. Why did you not tell me at once, that Antony and Herod were both in love with Mariamne; and that you feared

the Roman would remove his rival, as soon as he discovered him?—What would you have me do?"

"Your penetration has the start of your judgment. Aulenus, it is long since Antony saw Mariamne, so he cannot be said to love her, but he remembers her—he is coming to Jerusalem, at least so report says—If he again beholds her transcendant beauty.—He need not woo her.—A Ruler of the world has only to ask the ambitious Asmonean, and be accepted. Herod loves her, with all the violence of his nature;—she favours him. He would not brook even the Triumvir for a rival,—but would oppose him; and in so doing, die. His passion burns too fiercely to last: he is going to Antioch, and may be absent long enough to consume it: were Antony, in the mean time, to marry Mariamne, I should save my brother, your friend and benefactor, from becoming a prey unto his enemy. But, Aulenus, Antony has been long away; his recollection of Mariamne should be recalled; he should be informed of her surpassing beauty; and it should be gently hinted, that

hearsay gave her to some high Rabbi, distantly connected with the Asmonean blood."

Aulenus had assumed a grave and attentive look, then replied;

"Your observations are most just. Herod's passion will pass away; and he must, unknown to himself, be protected against the Triumvir. You wish me to hasten to Antioch, I suppose; and, well convinced of my affection and fidelity, to counterplot the unwise passion of the Governor."

"That is exactly what I wish;—and there is no one known to me whom I could trust on so great and delicate a mission, as Aulenus."

They parted. Salome was satisfied, that the prospect of advantage would make her satellite most zealous. Aulenus clearly perceived, that her object was, to prevent her brother from uniting himself to the Princess; with equal shrewdness he saw, that to discover beauty for the amorous Antony, was to obtain a private audience—to what that might lead, he knew not, but anticipated benefit; and was, therefore, contented with the bargain he had

tacitly made with Salome; since he might be a gainer, and could not be a loser by it.—Who else suffered, he cared not. He departed for Antioch.

CHAPTER IV.

THE love which had been excited in Herod, was now become an ardent fire pervading every thought, and brightening all his views of ambition. After some hours of repose, his mind became more capable of reflecting on what had occurred; and he began to devise schemes for preventing the Triumvir from visiting Jerusalem. After surveying, with rapid glance, the political state of that portion of the Roman world, and seeing no combinations by which his end could be gained, he suddenly thought of Cleopatra. He had ascertained, from Dellius, who had been sent to summon her, that she intended to meet Antony in Cilicia; and he knew that her object was to renew the intercourse which had existed between them when he served under Gabinius, in Syria, as well as to make him

pander to her avarice, as she had done Cæsar, and the son of Pompey before. At first, he dreaded, lest she should seek some mode of destroying Mariamne; but when he remembered that he might gain her friendship, and that she could obtain Antony's sanction for his marriage, he determined to run the risk of her seeking Mariamne's life, and send a special messenger to Cleopatra to inform her, "that Antony proposed to visit Jerusalem, and there he was likely to be allured by the charms of a young and enchanting Asmonean Princess, whose talents were equal to her beauty."

He had about his person a noble Arab whose life he had saved, and whose family he had rescued from the hands of their enemies. This man he had found grateful, and knew that his abilities were of an order calculated to communicate such information to a woman so artful as the Egyptian Queen. He sent for him, gave him the simple message, warned him of the Queen's subtilty, bade him tell her no more, and depart, accompanied by a small escort, without communicating his route to any one,

and with a present of form, as a means of obtaining a private interview. He then prepared for his own departure to Antioch. Previous to his leaving Jerusalem he saw Mariamne, her mother, and Hyrcanus. Herod won the support of Alexandra by presents of gold and jewels. Hyrcanus pronounced his benediction on their espousals, and he set out, elate with hope, to see one of the rulers of the world.

Antony, soon after his arrival at Antioch fixed a day on which those who were aggrieved should present their petitions to him. Aulenus, mistrusting the adherents immediately about the person of the Triumvir, and dreading the vengeance of Herod in case he should discover that he had communicated the intelligence of Mariamne's beauty to him, determined to inform only Antony. He disguised himself, mingled with the crowd, and was among the first who presented a tablet to the chief. One of the attendants was on the point of receiving it, but Aulenus withdrew it, and again presented it to Antony; as only a few words were written on it, he read them, and waving his attendants to re-

tire, merely said, " Aulenus, I remember you; meet me at sunset in the myrtle-walk near the Temple at Daphne." The soldier retired, and the crowd again approached the spot where the Triumvir stood.

Before evening Aulenus was in the Grove of Daphne. The declining sun was covered by a cloud, through which its beams burst in lines of light, radiating from its rolling edges, imbuing the lower portion of the heavens with a golden gleam, and fringing with gold and purple the light clouds that seemed to court, by remaining unmoved, the departing glories of the heavenly orb; the splendid hues graduated into softer tints until they mingled with the dark blue vault of heaven, from which every cloud had hastened, as if to partake of the parting blessing of the source of life and light. For miles around the undulating ground exposed masses of the dark cypress, cedar, and laurel to the showering beams, whose intense gleams brightened their foliage into light, shot through the long vistas, illumined the deep arcades, and sheeted with glowing and moving gold the limpid Orontes,

and seemed to linger on the majestic temple dedicated to the god. The effect was heightened by the deep shadows of the western aspects, and the cool translucent waters of rills and fountains that meandered through this region of delights. Groups were wending their way to the temple, sometimes amid the gleaming light, and other times distinctly seen in the clear deep shade. In the bowers and arcades were seen either listlessly reclining, or roving entwined in each others arms, the votaries of unhallowed pleasure. Forms now and then issued from the glens and grottos that realised to the imagination the fabled nymphs and dryads, and again retired.

While Aulenus stood gazing on the scene, a hand placed on his shoulder startled him from his reverie; the voice of Antony was acknowledged by the soldier's ready obeisance.

"Rise Aulenus, do you not see that I am habited as a simple Roman, so not to be known as Antony. What is the mystery you have to relate from that city of riots, rites, and rabbis?"

"A mystery that I would not tell to other ears than thine, lest it should never have reached

you, and cost me dear. Know, mighty Antony, that there dwells in Jerusalem an Asmonean Princess more beautiful than the nymph to whom these groves are dedicated. She has seen you, and from one of her attendants I learnt, that she well remembered you. This same most beauteous Princess is about to be allied to an old rabbi, who does little more than sin and pray alternately. When such transcendant loveliness was to be had by my great captain and benefactor Antony, I could, in grateful remembrance of his kindness, do no less than hasten here to tell him, knowing that *he* would not betray my zeal to give him pleasure."

An expression of satisfaction played on the countenance of Antony as he listened to Aulenus.

" You judged right to tell no other, and that I would keep your counsel. Go back to Jerusalem—stay; take that signet to my treasurer and bid him give you the gold in the small coffer which came yesterday—use it with discretion, and be not surprised if you see me a rabbi at Jerusalem—be secret, and trust to me."

He inclined his head and left him. As the Triumvir walked along the silent groves, and looked on the surrounding scene, and mingled the associations it occasioned with his thoughts, his romantic spirit was warmed, and he gave way to airy dreams which had all the keenness of pleasure without one substantial virtue on which to found his wishes. He fancied the beauteous Asmonean won by him, and hastening to the recesses of Daphne, there to be the living lovely goddess of his adoration. The recollection of her being of the haughty tribe, and a High Priest's daughter, added to the intenseness of his desire to begin the enterprize. To pursue it he was ready to leave his army to be enervated at Daphne, and his fame to be scoffed at by his people. In this mood he wandered among the verdant labyrinths of this sensual earthly elysium, until the shades of night warned him to return to the stately structures of Daphne.

As soon as the factious and jealous rabbis, who were opposed to Herod, learnt that he intended to do homage to the Roman Imperator,

they deputed an hundred of their body, among whom were many of their chief orators, to proceed to Antioch to prefer their complaints against him and his adherents. Herod prepared for his reception by transmitting a magnificent present of money enclosed in ivory chests of the most exquisite workmanship, and a number of the fleetest Parthian horses. These well-timed gifts procured from the Triumvir the most distinguished marks of approbation. When the rabbis made known the purport of their coming, Antony appointed a day on which to hear both parties at Daphne.

The ceremonies of the day were ushered in by solemn sacrifices in the temple dedicated to the Heathen deity.

As soon as the first morning beams dispelled the lingering shades of night, and the horizontal rays touched the summits of the hills and trees with silvery light, and glanced on the broad flowing Orontes, and the rapid Peneus, and were refracted from cascades and fountains of showering waters, the sounds from a thousand flutes attracted the eye towards the avenues

which from every quarter led to the temple. Along one came, winding from the deep shades of cypress, victims adorned with wreaths and flowers, preceded and followed by bearers of censers, from which spired fumes of odorous incense, then a procession of youths and virgins clothed in white, each bearing a branch of laurel. In other avenues were smaller bands, formed by those who came to make their voluntary offerings at the shrine, with encreasing crowds of spectators, on whose various dresses, from that of the simple shepherd to the crested warrior, the morning beams of the sun played, as if to add beauty to the votaries hastening to perform the rites dedicated to his earthly symbol.

Within the splendid fane was the colossal statue of the god; the greatest sculptors of Greece had exerted their utmost skill on the work. The deity was represented in the bloom of manhood, pouring a libation on the ground from a golden cup, and bending towards his mother earth as if to implore her to restore the coy and beauteous Daphne to his longing arms: a

golden quiver was suspended on his shoulders, the arrows were winged with rays formed of blazing jewels, and his silver bow lay unstrung near his feet. This temple of the god of light was adorned with gold and gems, and all his feats were sculptured with consummate skill on the surrounding walls.

While the Triumvir assisted at the usual rites, Hyrcanus, the complaining rabbis, Herod, his brother Phasaelus, and their followers, ranged themselves around the tribunal of Daphne, awaiting his return. The blasts of clarions, relieved at periods by the floating sounds of flutes, and the distant hum of the moving crowd, at length announced the termination of the Heathen rites and the approach of Antony. The Triumvir mounted with slow and steady step the throne which had been raised; he stood for some time receiving the homage of many tributary kings, who had assembled to hear the trial, his reason for remaining standing was to display his majestic form, which had been aptly compared to that of Hercules; to effect this purpose his purple trabea, bordered with gold, hung gracefully

and loosely over his left arm, leaving his right side, breast and shoulders only covered by a thin and close-setting tunic of scarlet, adorned with edges of gold, through which the form and movement of every muscle could be plainly discerned. The trabea fell nearly to the ground, but opened sufficiently before to show his well-formed limbs; the sandals were short, so that the perfect model of the leg might not be injured even by the lacings of them.

His carriage was dignified; but art had diminished the ease which nature had bestowed on him. His waving hair parted in front, and spread curling over his neck:—his features were handsome, manly, and strongly marked,—there was, at times, a high and romantic expression on his brow, but it quickly passed away, and was succeeded by an irresolute look, while his eyes wandered round the assembly. There was none of that fixed elevation which virtue and intelligence generally implant on the countenance; but more marks of indifference, and some indications of fierceness, particularly about the mouth. There were times when his

eyes were contracted, and pourtrayed a mean and suspicious look.

As soon as the silence of expectation reigned on every side, he sternly eyed the contending parties, and thus briefly spoke.

" I, Marcus Antonius, Imperator and one of the Triumvirate of Public Affairs, have ordered you, Sameas, and the other eminent deputies from Jerusalem, and Herod, the Governor of Idumæa, and his brother Phasaelus, to meet here at this time, that I may enquire into this factious dispute, and by awarding justice prevent a recurrence of evils injurious to the Jewish people, and examples of insubordination to the Roman empire. Ye Rabbis, what is the complaint that ye have come to prefer against the Governor of Idumæa?"

There was some stir among them; at length Sameas stated the accusation.

" Thou knowest, O Antony, as does the whole world, how our forefathers were led from Egyptian bondage by Moses, who received, from Jehovah, the laws by which we are governed. Among them was an express command, to

assemble seventy elders of the tribes, to bear the burden of the people, and to judge with justice. That council is called, by us, the Sanhedrin, of which I am the father. Mighty Triumvir, Herod was summoned by this council, to be tried for usurping the power of life and death, which belongs to the Sanhedrin alone. He came surrounded by bands of armed men, and himself in robes of state and with spear and bow, bringing letters from the Lieutenant Sextus Cæsar;—thus mocking the assembled council. He afterwards refused to obey its mandates; but returned with an army,—drove Antigonus from Judæa,—slew Malichus,—raised insurrections in the city, and set at nought the Roman and the Jewish laws. Hyrcanus reigns but in name; for Herod and his guilty brother guide his counsels, and direct the government. Suffering these evils, and knowing thy power and justice, we have come to seek redress, and solicit thee to punish these evil doers."

He ceased;—Antony looked towards Herod, and said;

"Governor, if thou canst refute these heavy

charges, thou, or thy advocate, art free to speak."

Messala stood before the assembly.—He first smiled in utter scorn at the complainants, then addressed their judge.

"Mighty Imperator;—well does Herod know that thou art just, and would'st not suffer his fidelity and zeal to be impeached, without permitting him to reply. We will not long detain thee from the great duties thou so well fulfillest. Thou shalt hear the truth; for Herod needs no artifice to veil his deeds:—he only hopes that truth may not be thought, on his part, boasting.

"There roved, throughout the province, that thou gavest in charge to Herod, a robber, called Hezekiah; to whom, deserters from the armies, —slaves who had left their masters,—and felons who had fled from justice,—joined themselves. These monsters robbed the people, slew them and the priests, dishonoured the women, and carried away captive the children. The Governor pursued them,—caught their chief, whom, with many of his company, he executed. For this good deed, the enemies of Rome summoned

him, and would have slain him under the pretext that he had offended against the Jewish law. He fled. Soon after Antigonus leagued with a great band of Parthians, and would have surprised the Roman legions, if this guilty Herod had not, by his exertions, warned them. In revenge, Malichus, the confederate of Antigonus, poisoned your ancient friend Antipater; and would have raised rebellion, if the Romans, aided by Phasaelus, had not checked it, and restored peace. Antigonus, conscious of the crimes he had committed, fled. Herod was conducting the murderer of his father to be tried by the Roman law, when some of the Julian legion seized him by authority, and slew him. Hyrcanus is present, and will tell thee, just and mighty Imperator, whether his government has been usurped by Herod."

Antony, already tired of the debate, called for Hyrcanus, who had taken his seat among the tributary princes. He arose.—Antony did the same, and greeting him, asked;

"If he was satisfied with the conduct of Herod?"

The High Priest unhesitatingly declared, that without him, Jerusalem would become a prey to all the horrors of civil discord."

"Enough," exclaimed the Triumvir, "Herod and Phasaelus, ye are Tetrarchs and Rulers of the affairs of Judæa. Seize the fifteen leaders of that factious, false, and rebellious crowd of Jews, and lead them away to death."

Consternation and dismay pervaded the Jewish missionaries. The guards hastened to secure them. Hyrcanus became pale and trembled. Herod rushed to the foot of the throne, and bending, besought Antony to pardon them. He hesitated;—but at length said, in a loud and angry voice;

"Herod seeks your pardon:—I therefore release you; but leave hostages for the payment of forty pounds weight of gold within three months, and forty more within four months; it will make you remember not to accuse our trusty governors falsely; and it will prove to our legions, for whom I destine it, that their assistance in quelling your headlong factions, is not thus to be despised. Begone, or I will double

the trifling fine imposed on your troublesome city."

He descended from his throne, while acclamations filled the air. The assembly dispersed.

After the banquet, prepared by the orders of Antony, was finished, and Herod was alone, he gave way to unbounded joy. He saw the cunning rapacious temper of the Triumvir displayed in his late judgment, and was determined to avail himself of it. The road leading to the summit of his ambition was now open to him, and he was desirous of returning to Jerusalem to avail himself of the power with which he had been invested. The letters from Antony were all he required; and he determined to obtain them as soon as possible. While ruminating on the events of the day, his faithful Arab suddenly appeared.

He hastily asked, "What brought him there so quickly."

He replied;

"The Queen had left Egypt long before you dispatched me. I met her far advanced on her journey, and she is hastening to meet Antony.

She took this diamond from her finger, and bade me give it to you. She was so well pleased, that I returned with a heavier burthen than I went."

Smiling contemptuously, he said, ironically;

"I will keep the bauble as a soldier would a trophy; for to outwit, or turn to ones own purpose, that cunning avaricious harlot, is a proof of generalship not to be underrated. What wilt thou think, my trusty friend, when I tell thee that the public affairs of Judæa are entrusted to my care?"

"I think that thou wilt do well to hasten to Jerusalem; for I learnt, that the exile Antigonus has fooled the Parthian by promises of gold, and five hundred women, to aid him in recovering Judæa."

Herod started from his seat, his eyes flashed, and he exclaimed;

"When did you hear this? Where is Phasaelus? Go, seek him: that crafty knave Pacorus, will not leave a talent or a brazier even in the Temple."

The Arab had scarcely left him, when he

hurried to Hyrcanus, and in passing, commanded the captain of his guard to hasten to him.

After a short consultation, Phasaelus departed with Hyrcanus and half the guard, and sped their way to Jerusalem. Herod sought Antony, and was admitted to a private audience.

As soon as they were alone, the Triumvir bade him to be seated, and congratulated him on his complete refutation of the charges exhibited against him by the Jews.

Herod abruptly remarked;

"A faithful messenger has just brought me intelligence, that Antigonus has leagued with the Parthian, and is marching on Jerusalem; so I came to return you thanks for rendering me justice, and to solicit letters from you, that I may go and repulse the rebel."

Antony thought for a moment, then fiercely said;

"Curses on that fickle race of Parthians.—Well, they are certain to quarrel with their employers. You must maintain the power I have entrusted you with, and get assistance where you can."

He called a secretary, directed him to write the letters to the Jews commanding them to give the direction of their public affairs to Herod, then turning to him, asked;

"Has not Hyrcanus two grandchildren,—one a youth of promise, the other a young and beauteous woman?"

Herod was, for a moment, becoming embarrassed; but quickly recovering his self-possession, replied;

"Yes; and they are accounted as you have said.—Perhaps you will honour Jerusalem with your presence; then they will, of course, attend your court in Hyrcanus Palace."

The Triumvir was not willing to make known the intention he then had of visiting Jerusalem, and so asked;

"Is not the daughter to be allied to some antique rabbi of her race before many months have passed?"

Herod, aware that Princes often receive information of the most private and trifling transactions, feared to commit himself by his answer, and paused, while his rival's eye was fixed on

his countenance; after some hesitation, he answered;

"Your intelligence surprises me.—Hyrcanus has not communicated such information to me, therefore I doubt it."

Antony smiled, and remarked;

"My question, Governor, has startled you"—

Then looking at him with more earnestness, continued;

"Perhaps, *now* you conduct the affairs of Judæa, you would fain unite yourself to their royal race.—If such has been your ambitious dreams, since we parted at Daphne this morning, banish them from your mind; for I have found a husband for the beauteous Mariamne."

Herod's pulse beat high, and his rage was but ill-suppressed; yet he sufficiently commanded himself to say, with some composure;

"I have heard, that this Asmonean girl, concentrates in herself the pride of all her race, and is not likely to be very tractable.—Were Antony to woo her, perchance her pride, great as it is, would be satisfied."

The Triumvir's vanity was gratified; and a

look, not to be misunderstood, lingered on his countenance. Herod had become collected, though most deeply interested—Antony carelessly remarked;

"I remember her a child; and, in sport, promised her an island.—I will change the course of the Orontes, convert the Groves of Daphne into one, and keep my word.—To dally with such a queen, in such a place, would be pretty pastime. What thinkest thou, most thoughtful Governor?"

"I think thou makest merry with the High Priest's daughter," he replied.

"Thou sayest so with so doleful a face and tone, that methinks thou would'st prefer placing her in some cave in rocky Idumæa."

"Perhaps the rebel Antigonus intends that she should form one of the five hundred with which your obedient Parthian is to be repaid his fealty to the Triumvirate."

Herod accompanied this sarcastic remark, which he hoped might rouse Antony to assist him with some legions, with a look of expectation, accompanied by a tone inferring rebuke at

his remissness in not reducing the Parthian to submission.

" I shall not fear that their disobedience will remain unpunished, while Herod has Idumæa and the Jewish Power at his disposal.—We will order the Lieutenant, at Jericho, to aid you, lest you should lose the Asmonean Mariamne."

" Thanks, noble Antony, for your timely help, since Jerusalem is much disturbed.—My choicest troops are with *your army*, destined for Asia; and it would be an everlasting blot on my fame, were a barbarian to be paid the price of his insolence to the Roman Power with the person of a Jewish Princess, now their affairs are entrusted to me: next the fascinating Cleopatra would be given to some hide-clothed or painted Briton for a playmate.—Royalty must be ever held sacred;—that I know you think, by the ready aid you have tendered me, at even the suspicion of an insult to be offered to Mariamne."

The secretary returned with the letters to the Sanhedrin,—Antony signed them, then bade Herod hasten to Jerusalem, saying—

"Yes, that was my reason—watch over her, and take care that the Parthian does not get her."

He retired overwhelmed with surprize, rage, and incipient jealousy—In less than an hour he was on his road to Jerusalem.

Although he took every precaution to prevent being surprised, and sent forward scouts to bring intelligence not only of the state of the country as they passed along, but of the information the people possessed, and the reports current among them, yet he was unusually thoughtful. He could not divine from what source Antony had learnt that he was desirous of marrying Mariamne, at first he suspected Hyrcanus; then he rejected the idea of the Princess herself having communicated it; at length he seriously supposed that Doris, from motives of jealousy and envy, had by some private means made known the whole transaction, and was ready to sacrifice the object of her fears to the Triumvir. This was so opposed to her natural character that doubts perplexed him; his belief in Salome's affection and fidelity prevented him from surmising that she was the secret betrayer. Then he remem-

bered the oath of agreement with Mariamne, and that the secret had not escaped him, and was cast into a sea of doubt. He knew the adventurous spirit of Antony, and that his greatest weakness was permitting his love of women to lead him from the paths of duty. The resistance he was certain that Mariamne would oppose to any advances he might make, were the surest means of rousing Antony, first to try and overcome them, and if he found it impossible, to exert either artifice or force to get the desired object within his power. When this thought crossed him, he suddenly reined up his horse, uttered a cry almost of despair, and grasped his sword, while vengeance flashed from his eyes. This action had an immediate effect upon the whole cavalcade, the simultaneous movement of the soldiers roused him from his reverie; he instantly collected himself, peered through the gloom, and galloped forward as if he saw some enemy at hand. The occurrence passed over, and he again relapsed into a thoughtful mood, which ended, by his placing all his hopes on Cleopatra or in despair.

When he had accomplished half his journey, his scouts returned with a jaded horseman, who, two days before, had been sent from Jerusalem by Phasaelus to inform Herod that Pacorus had pushed on a body of Parthian horse with Antigonus at their head, and then were not many leagues from the city, and that he dreaded their attacking both the temple and the palace. At this intelligence Herod gave way to unbounded fury, tears of rage fell from his eyes, and execrations came from his lips; with a cry of agony he ordered his soldiers to follow him, and hurried onward. The tired horseman was by his side giving him all the information he could, and at the same time endeavouring to restrain his impetuous course, by assuring him, that the main body of the Parthian force was yet on the confines of the country, and that his valiant brother and the Jews of his party could hold out the city until succours arrived. His only reply was; "Get from the rear a fresh horse and rejoin me"—When the horseman had obeyed his order, and was again riding by his side, his whole anxiety seemed to be for the safety of the palace; he

made the most minute inquiries into its state, and what had been done to render it more capable of bearing a siege. When he heard that his brother had placed in it both Doris and Aristobulus, with a strong body of Asmonean followers, and some chosen Jewish warriors, and had even built up the entrances, and placed a Balista and Catapulta on the top, he fiercely laughed, expressed his gladness, and profusely remunerated the courier by giving him the noble steed he had mounted, instead of the worn down creature left to follow in the rear.

On the evening of the ensuing day, the declining beams glittering on the distant hills shewed that they had nearly terminated their rapid march. More caution was now necessary, and the whole cavalcade halted in a retired spot, while several proceeded by different routes to the city, to give intelligence of the arrival of Herod, and obtain that information which would enable him to decide on what was to be done. During the hours which intervened before the return of the first messenger, his restlessness was so great as to approach an aberration

from reason, he climbed to the summit of a high projecting rock, then quickly descended, called for his horse, and would have ridden forward with reckless haste, if his friends had not recalled to his mind the unprofitable risk he ran of losing his liberty and life. The night had far advanced when his listening ear caught the sounds of a horse at full speed; he hastened in the direction from which it came, and met one of his messengers almost breathless, with his horse white with foam, as he approached them, he cried:

"To the rescue, to the rescue, Antigonus is besieging the palace."

The words had scarcely passed his lips when the spurs had roused the mettle of the warriors' steeds, who all kept pace with the raging Herod. As they neared the city, a confused din was borne to them on the wind, then a crash and shout was heard, and here and there a bursting flame was seen to illumine the air. On reaching the summit of the hills, they raised a cry and spurred their reeking horses down the steep descent, for the flames of burning houses near the Temple and Palace rose before them; on the plain be-

neath were wailing women and crying children flying to the mountains, while in the city was distinctly heard the din of war, the clash of arms, and the trumpet at intervals signalling to the combatants the orders of their leaders.

Herod waved his glittering sword, urged his foaming war horse, and called aloud to spur and follow him—They reached the gate before which was drawn up some Parthian horse—He, with a shout, dashed on and made an opening wide, and forced a passage with all his men. They followed their chief up the steep street over flaming beams and through opposing bands, and reached the open space around the palace. On one side Phasaelus led on his shaken forces, while showers of stones and darts came thick and fast from every part of the building. The flaming houses all around cast a dreadful gleam on the contending warriors, and shewed the dying, and the dead, and the flying inhabitants as they crossed the streets. When Herod entered the square he raised a cry of despair and vengeance so loud and fierce that the battling warriors stopped for an instant to see

from whence it came. He in a moment perceived that he was on the flank of unprepared infantry, and without checking his full career charged in upon them, followed by his comrades. A shout of "Herod, Herod" from the Palace, repeated quicker than an echo, by Phasaelus and his men, told the besiegers of the rescue, who as soon as they heard it felt the pressure of their flank and rear upon their front. Phasaelus charged the other flank, while a sortie was made on their front from the palace under cover of a cloud of darts and stones from men and engines. The timely rescue inspired the half beaten soldiers with renovated strength and courage, while it spread dismay among their enemies—Herod rode on scattering, like corn before the scythe, the discomfited followers of Antigonus, who now sought safety by flight; in their rear were flaming houses and streets blocked by masses of the burning ruins, yet through these did terror drive them.

Phasaelus cut his way to Herod, and simply said (for there was no time for greeting) "Secure the square, and I will guard the Temple, they

must retreat at least to the suburbs, there they are too strong for us, but on the morrow we will discomfit them as Joshua at Gideon."

He passed on. Herod in a voice that was re-echoed from the walls called off his men, then with the rapidity of light divided and posted them, and rode round to see if every avenue was guarded, that done, he said some few words of commendation, leaped from his horse, and rushed all soiled and blood-stained as he was into the palace, and made his way to where he supposed Mariamne had taken shelter.

The most retired apartments of the palace were empty: with increasing agitation he hurried to the court to enquire where she and Doris had been placed, on reaching it he saw the dying and the dead scattered around amidst fragments of ruin, broken arrows, and half burnt combustible weapons, that had been hurled into the building, but no one was there from whom he was likely to obtain intelligence, he again hastily looked round the spacious area, and saw, by the assistance of a sudden gleam of light, a female form bending beneath a burthen, he hastened towards it. The

woman placed the heavy vase of water she was carrying, and in a voice of command mingled with fear exclaimed;

"Who are you? Instantly quit the palace, or aid our friends in driving back our enemies."

Herod recognised the voice of his beloved Mariamne, and sprung towards her uttering words of joy—She drew back, placed her finger on her lips as she said;

"Remember your oath." Then after a moment's pause added; "Thanks gallant Herod for this timely aid, it has saved us from destruction, and I am most grateful—But see our wounded friends are strewed around us, and call for water to slake their consuming thirst—they have fought for us, and the least we can do is to aid them at their greatest need—farewell—to your duty—Doris follows me."

She raised her vessel of water and went to the nearest wounded soldier, and with her own hand poured the grateful draught into his parched lips, wiped the clotted gore from his brow and staunched the fresh flowing blood, while the man called down blessings on her head, and tears

moistened the eyes from which no pain could have drawn them, so much more powerful a way has pity and benevolence over the human heart than even the burning anguish of a lacerated wound.

Herod was overawed by her language and manner, and now stood rivetted to the spot gazing on her administering comfort to the faint and wounded men, and almost fancying that he looked upon some more than earthly being. The voice of Doris roused him, he turned and the affectionate woman threw herself on his neck, and wept aloud; she raised her head, cast a quick and penetrating glance on Mariamne, then buried her face in her husband's bosom. Herod unloosed her arms, and asked for his son, his sister, Alexandra, the High Priest, and many more. She replied, "they took refuge in the tower, but before the princess and I could get there the Parthians came, and we were put back into the palace."

As she spoke, her eyes first glanced on Herod, then on Mariamne, and again she bent her head on his bosom and said;

"She cannot be untrue, I do not wonder at it."

The heavy tread of armed men, and the sound of voices, called their attention. It was Phasaelus with Hyrcanus, and those who had taken refuge in the tower.

The soldiers bore away their wounded comrades, and the others retired into the palace. Among them was the young Aristobulus slightly wounded, to whom Mariamne was devoting her whole attention. Salome attempted to get an audience of Herod, but he bade her not to interrupt him, and went away with the High Priest and his brother to consult on affairs of the greatest moment.

CHAPTER V.

HEROD'S manner to Mariamne previous to his departure, did not escape the watchful eyes of Salome, who had heard, as she came from the tower, the praises bestowed on her by the soldiers, and their proud declarations of her being a true descendant of the patriots Mattathias and Maccabæus. Her jealousy and envy were excited, even while she determined to use the information to inflame the passion of the Triumvir for her. She endeavoured to dissemble her hatred, but Mariamne had heard enough from Doris to make her suspect her sincerity, and so treated her with a degree of reserve which exasperated her enemy.

They all endeavoured to obtain some rest after the terror, harass, and fatigue of the preceding day and night. Before morning the heavy tread of the armed warriors hastening to the top of the palace, forming in the court and gardens,

and posting themselves at every aperture, roused the sleepers, and warned them to prepare for a fresh attack.

Herod returned to the palace; he was so enamoured that, even at that trying time, Mariamne was his ruling thought: he sought her in the apartment where he left her a few hours before, as he approached it, full and clear voices of praise and prayer for help reached his ear; he stopped, the swelling sounds increased until they attained the highest fervour, then sunk gradually to notes of deepest supplication. The contrast between them and the stern voices and noise of the men preparing for the work of death, affected him—he stole gently on, and saw through the half open door his beloved Mariamne, and her women on their knees, pouring forth a hymn to their heavenly Father and Protector. He gazed in mute admiration, and for once truly felt the mighty power of piety, and female loveliness. His heart beat quick, his love of war and glory seemed a base and earthly passion, and made him unworthy of such an elevated being as his betrothed wife. Every lurking suspicion and

jealousy, at that moment was banished from his mind, and thrilling through every vein with enthusiastic love and admiration, he was on the point of darting forward, and clasping her to his throbbing bosom. She turning, saw him, and raising her hand, placed her finger on her lip, which checked him.

If at that hour the excitements of war, and the hopes and fears, originating from what happened at Daphne, had not necessarily compelled him to act according to circumstances, who can tell that the ardent disposition of Herod might not have led him, with such an example, to have become a saint, rather than as he did, a ferocious savage? Let those who smile at the thought, trace to their first germs the causes of many lines of different conduct they have pursued, whether good or evil, and they will probably find them far more inconsiderable, than that which for a season wrought on the uncommon mind of Herod.

They ceased their hymn, and he approaching saluted her and those around her, and was soon joined by the other women

After some discussion it was decided that the women should remain within the palace, under the protection of Herod and Phasaelus with a chosen body of men. A signal from the watchman on the tower informed them that the enemy approached. The chiefs concentrated their force, examined every part likely to become a point for attack, saw that every preparation was made, then spoke to their soldiers, and after lauding their gallantry, told them that not only their High Priest was with them, but the Princess and the other women of rank. They shouted, and vowed to defend them to the last. Each then hastened to his station, and soon an awful silence reigned through the spacious pile. The men waiting for the arrival of the foe, the women on the ground with their faces covered, silently imploring assistance.

Every heart beat with quicker pulse at the approaching tramp of the heavy armed assailants. As soon as the foremost appeared in the square, the voice of Herod was heard directing the Catapulta and Balista to be discharged, in an instant the whizzing of a thousand arrows filled the air,

and showers of stones hurtled on the foe—then all distinctions of sounds were lost in general tumult and confusion—now and then a groan or shriek from some dying or wounded wretch thrilled through the souls of the defenceless women. The wounded were brought, or dragged themselves into the sheltered passages and inner rooms, and were attended on by the women, and those who were useless as soldiers. At length a general rush was heard, and Herod with his brother sallied out against the foe, and drove them through the city, then those in the suburbs were attacked and routed; many of them fled into the courts of the Temple. The chieftains returned flushed with victory, and by skill endeavoured to secure the advantages they had gained.

The cunning Antigonus seeing no chance of overcoming Herod, proposed that an armistice should be agreed on, and that the Parthian General Pacorus should be admitted into the city, and mediate between them. He came, and was lodged in the Palace. Though his form was graceful, his speech fluent, and his manner

prepossessing, there was a sinister look in his black eyes which told that he partook largely of Parthian perfidy. After many protestations of friendship for the Jews, he proposed that Hyrcanus, Herod, and Phasaelus should accompany him to Barzapharnes, the Governor of Syria, under his king, and there confirm the peace on a lasting and solid foundation. Phasaelus, contrary to the advice of Herod, went with the High Priest.

A few nights after their departure, Mariamne first sent for Doris, then for Herod. She told them that one of her attendants, a slave, had overheard Antigonus giving secret orders to his captain of his guard to be in readiness on the succeeding night, and to have vehicles prepared to carry away the women. He was much disturbed at this information, and at once summoned his mother, Salome, and Alexandra. When they were assembled, he told them in a low voice, that Antigonus had determined to seize and send them to Parthia as a portion of the five hundred women to be paid the king for his assistance in deposing Hyrcanus; he then ordered them not

to confer even with each other on the matter, but be prepared to escape with him that night. Herod decoyed Pacorus from the Palace lest he should perceive the preparations, and after remaining with him in the Temple for some time, returned to the Palace alone. As soon as he entered, a messenger in disguise, from his brother, told him that Phasaelus had been betrayed, and was with Hyrcanus in confinement; and that he himself was to be seized and murdered, and all the Asmonean women to be sent to Barzapharnes.

He stifled his rage and grief, and directed the messenger to return to his brother, and having learnt all he could, to seek him in Idumæa. He gave him money, and crossing the court, saw Aulenus, on his approach, leave Salome. He did not suspect her of intending him any evil, and so made no enquiry of the reason of Aulenus being with her, but told her what he had just heard, and urged her to prepare herself for the worst.

He walked on the top of the Palace meditating the best means of escape, after deciding on

them, he selected his most trusty followers, and without giving them any clue to his intentions, bade them to be stationed at a certain hour in particular places, and to watch for him.

The love he felt for Mariamne was so great, that he thought more of the danger to which she might be exposed than of his own safety, or that of all the others, and determined to see and give her minute instructions how to act in case of emergency. He also resolved that the slave who was deeply attached to her, and the wife of Babarrah the Arab, should remain close to her, and share any dangers, so that she might, if captured, have two women both willing and capable of assisting her.

He found her alone, and in tears.

"My Mariamne," he exclaimed, "do not weep at the danger which stern necessity compels you to endure—remember you are with your mother and your betrothed husband."

She had seen much of his courage and generosity since his return, and had heard him express his determination to maintain her brother's right to the dominion of Judæa, and felt more

tenderly towards him than before; besides, his love was evidently great, and had some effect on her feelings towards him. She replied with some slight touch of dignity;

"I have within me the blood of the heroes who slew Antiochus, and though, like a woman, may be appalled because I cannot resist danger, the anticipation of it will never make me weep. Ah, Herod, I weep not for myself, but for you. I have heard, no matter how, that the Triumvir Antony has left Daphne, and is sailing for Tyre, and has said that he will visit the Palace at Jerusalem. Why comes he here?"

She was silent, and covering her face wept aloud. Herod tried to comfort her, then muttering wildly, paced the room and said;

"Coming here, coming here—let him come and while away his time with Antigonus and the accursed Parthian—Why do you weep for me, my loved Mariamne?"

She rose from the ground, threw her unbraided hair aside, and while tears fell heated by her burning blushes, exclaimed;

"What other reason can the wretch have for

coming here but to seek one who abhors him? Oh, Herod, when he hears that we have fled he will murder you; oh yes, he will murder my betrothed husband, and leave me to be consumed with grief, and become a prey to a foul Idolater."

She bent her head, and would have sunk down if he had not clasped her to his bosom: in a tremulous voice he said;

"I will not now seek farther into the foundations you may have for all this dread; but, my beloved Mariamne, if Antony should dare to hunt us to Massada, I will defend you to the last, and when defence is useless, we will die together."

She started, and with an hysteric laugh exclaimed;

"Now I am satisfied, you will slay me rather than yield me to that evil spirit—bless you—I am ready to fight my way to Massada."

As she spoke her tears ceased, and her eyes beamed with resolution. The enamoured Tetrach could only gaze on her with yet more ardent love.

Salome had not been able to ascertain from

Alexandra whether her brother was an accepted suitor : she was not satisfied with the information given her by Doris, although her dependance on it was much encreased by Herod's manner to the Princess since their confinement in the Palace. The devotion shewn to her by the soldiers and her own enchanting demeanour, had added to the hatred and envy of Salome, and encreased her determination to prevent her being allied to her brother. Aulenus had that morning arrived with the intelligence of Antony's having sailed for Tyre, with the intention of prosecuting his wishes respecting the Princess. Her conference had been broken off by the unexpected appearance of her brother, and she was most anxious to renew it. Aulenus had not quitted the Palace, with a hope that she might find some opportunity of conversing with him. After several attempts she succeeded in obtaining an interview with him in one of the rooms fronting the square, the lattices of which had been barricadoed to resist the attacks of the assailants. It was a spacious hall, in which many warlike implements had been placed ; the apertures left open were merely in-

terstices through which to look at the enemy, and did not admit more light than enough to shew the extent through the gloom. Salome had looked carefully round to see if any one was there before she entered with Aulenus; having satisfied herself of their privacy, she in a low anxious voice enquired;

"When will he be at Tyre?"

"In two or three days from this time at farthest."

"What did he say of her—did he remember her?"

"Perfectly, and vowed that he would woo her, if he came in the disguise of a rabbi, to Jerusalem."

"Aulenus, your benefactor is enamoured of this deep designing, proud Princess, and must be saved from ruin."

"You know that I am prepared to aid you in your sisterly intentions, indeed I think his own rank and glory would be advanced were Antony to take her from him. Surely a province would indemnify him for the loss of a love."

"Did he think as wisely as you, all would be

well, but his very soul seems wrapt up in her—if she becomes Antony's it must be without his knowledge.—Listen, Aulenus, to night he removes us all from the Palace, but where he intends to take us I know not: would it not be possible to place her in the hands of Antigonus? He would see the advantage of an alliance with the Triumvir, and he is as much her natural guardian as Hyrcanus."

"The only mode of doing so would be to make known to Antigonus your intended departure, but that, I fear, would place your brother's life in jeopardy."

"Aulenus, that will not do, or I might be a Parthian soldier's slave—could you not, amid the confusion, and aided by the night, carry the Princess to An—Antigonus?"

"By Jupiter that were a dangerous exploit when Herod and his guards are near. I have a friend who might be able to place her under the guardianship of Antigonus; I will go to him—if we do not meet again, be not surprised if you are a captive too."

They parted—he glad to have left the matter

in so indefinite a state, while she, reckoning on his selfishness, hoped that the expectation of reward from Antony might induce him to make some great effort to secure her victim.

After they had left the hall, a weak and wounded soldier, who had been placed in a recess by the directions of Mariamne, crawled from his mat into the passage, and there remained until he saw the young slave Tezellah, who had, by her orders, administered to him, after she had bound up his wounds. The exhausted man implored her to go immediately for the Princess, as he had, before he died, something of importance to tell her. Tezellah assisted him into an adjoining room, and hastened for her mistress. As soon as she approached the spot where the soldier had lain down, he raised himself, and after looking on her for a moment with his glazing eyes, faintly said ;

" The Lord hath redeemed thy life from destruction ; he hath crowned thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. Oh ! that I could go and fight, and by His assistance shield thee from thine enemies. When I was wounded and

my tongue clave to the roof of my mouth and fire consumed me, and my poor wife and unprotected babes were in my recollection,—You, a mighty Princess, came and unclasped my helmet, and staunched my blood, and gave me water, and soothed me, and cooled my throbbing head."

He had become excited as he spoke, and the faintness which he endured had subsided; but gratitude, that "memory of the heart" filled his breast, and he stopped and looked on her, and the tears gushed forth as if they had overflowed in his bosom, and, with almost prophetic voice, he continued, as he cast up his eyes to heaven,

"'With the merciful, thou wilt shew thyself merciful,' thou hast made me an unworthy and sinful man,—the instrument wherewith to requite her charity."

Mariamne had listened with surprise, and supposing that he only wished to thank her, was preparing to bid him farewell, and retire,—when he suddenly said;

"Go not until I tell you that you are betrayed.—I was on my mat in the cool recess, where you ordered me to be placed, and saw

Aulenus, one of Herod's captains, enter with a woman whom I did not know.—He told her that Antony was coming for you; and they agreed to deliver you up to Antigonus, who would use you to buy the base Triumvir's favors.—I remained as one dead, and saw the wretches go, and crawled into the passage; and if I had not seen you, would have called until some comrades had heard me, and who would soon have dispatched the betrayer of our friend and Princess.—Beware, if you travel to night, with whom you go. Oh that I could march or ride with Reuben and Jonathan my sons, we could guard you against a host: they are ready with the spear and the bow,—and remember that you had pity on their father in his distress."

She replied, with great agitation,—

"Thanks for the great service you have rendered me:—whenever I can requite it, I will.—Herod will guide us, so we shall be safe. —Where are your sons?"

"They are guards in the Temple; but can come if you send for them.—Ah! Herod is a

lion's whelp, and feareth no enemy;—but like that beast, is easily roused to anger, and allayeth it with blood.—Confide in his courage; but Princess, a father tells thee,—trust not in his heart, which is either like the fire, that consumeth itself and all around it, or like the chill icy wind on the highest mountain:—then he is deeper than the sea, and like it—insatiable and prodigal.—As thy guard, he will defend thee; but trust him no farther."

He sunk down exhausted. Mariamne desired Tezellah to call his comrades, and sent him to a place of safety, with money to defray his wants. She then sought Herod, whose apprehension and rage swelled every vein, when he heard of the intended treachery. He went for Reuben and Jonathan himself; and appointed them to posts about the vehicle in which Mariamne was to go, and redoubled his exertions to secure their safe retreat.

Mariamne's heart was filled with apprehension;—the words of the wounded soldier sunk deep in her memory, and grief seemed to claim her as a companion.

She knew that the imbecile Hyrcanus could not shield her,—Aristobulus was too young and too narrowly watched, and her mother Alexandra, from some unknown cause, had never inspired her with confidence, or treated her with affection. She saw no one who could and was ready to protect her, excepting Herod,—whom she admired; yet from whom her heart turned when she tried to feel the tenderness and affection that would have lived in her bosom for the man she had chosen for her husband under other circumstances. The approaching shades of evening warned her to prepare for flight:—to fortify her mind, she knelt and sought the protection of her heavenly Father.

The night had advanced; the women were all assembled; in the court yard were many vehicles, some of them with several horses; no voice was heard higher than a whisper from the men preparing them. While Mariamne was observing these preparations, and watching the anxious Herod giving directions to different men, Salome came to her and putting her arm round her waist, said, with affected sympathy;

"Alas we are now in adversity, and about to seek our safety by flight.—In adversity friends are tried and made; let our present lot unite us,—we may become yet more closely allied."

Mariamne turned her head, and fixing her eyes on those of Salome, calmly replied;

"When adversity has proved you sincere and kind, then may I have the gift of a friend in you; but it hath been said, trust ye not in a friend,—put ye not confidence in a guide,—keep the door of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom; for in the days of perplexity, our enemies are of our own house."

She released herself from the embrace, and was quitting the room, when she saw, in an angle of the passage, Aulenus and two strange men, speaking lowly and emphatically. She called aloud for Tezellah. Dermah answered, and coming towards her, said, as she turned her back on the men who had been startled at the voice, "Reuben and Jonathan are not far off, and I am here;" she then looked towards Aulenus, and called for Tezellah, who came

running towards her; as she passed the men, she turned and looked at them; her look spoke more than the base pander could endure, and he slunk away.

Salome was equally agitated by rage and fear, which was added to by perplexity, when she observed her minion retire from the piercing look of a Parthian slave girl, and discovered how ready Dermah was in her attendance on the Princess. She knew that her husband and Aulenus were intimate, and therefore hesitated to determine, whether she were an ally or an enemy.

At length Herod came, and commanding silence and implicit obedience, regulated their order of departure.

He placed his own mother, Alexandra, and the Princess together, with Dermah and Tezellah. At this arrangement Salome grew pale and suspected that he knew of her intentions. If escape had been practicable she would have flown, and waited the events of future circumstances by which to have regulated her conduct.

In the same vehicles with the women were

many armed men; the conductors, though in disguise, were all trusty followers of the Tetrarch. The gates were opened; and one vehicle led the way, followed by some baggage. Shortly after, others proceeded by a different route; at length the carriages which contained the women went forward. As they approached the gates of the city, the followers became more numerous; and soon after the suburbs were passed, troops of horsemen gathered round. All the vehicles were together, and mingled with them crowds of women, children, and aged men, on foot or on asses. A numerous band of soldiers preceded. Far before them were many well-mounted scouts; on either side were files of men, and behind were bodies of soldiers on foot, followed by the Tetrarch's guards. He came as soon as the cavalcade was arranged, and bade them all be of good courage; then rode to the rear, since it was on that quarter he expected to be attacked, as soon as his flight was known.

The stars shone brightly, but the moon did not afford her light. Silence pervaded the crowd, and was, at intervals, broken by the

crying of some frightened infant, or the neighing of some chafing steed.

They had proceeded nearly two leagues, and began to descend a steep and circuitous road, when the scouts rode in with the intelligence, that they had perceived small bodies of men lurking near the foot of the mountain. Herod was on the point of riding on when the rushing shout of many horsemen came louder and louder from the rear. The pace of the cavalcade was hastened that the horsemen might reach more open ground; while every man was prepared to meet the threatened danger, a flight of Parthian arrows told them that their enemies were near. Suddenly a body of men appeared on their right upon the hill above them, they rolled down stones, and threw flaming brands among the horses and crowd, while the rear was heavily charged by the Parthian horse. The voice of Herod cheered his men, and soon the rearward foes were checked. In the middle of the band, the shrieks of women and children and the cries of the burnt animals drowned even the crash and shouting of the soldiers. A body of superior

mounted and armed men made a decided attack on the vehicle which contained the Princess, some tried to kill the horses, some to entangle and overthrow them. Jonathan and Reuben, side by side, repulsed the fierce assailants, and were nobly seconded by their comrades. The flaming brands flew thicker, and more were lighted, as if to shew the enemy their prey. The defenders were borne back by the weight of numbers, and had almost given themselves and their charge up for lost, when Herod, with a cry which was re-echoed from the hills, came plunging onward on his wounded steed, with a part of his victorious guards. In a moment the tide of battle was turned, and the attacked became pursuers. He called back his men, and hastened to see if all were well within the vehicle. To his dismay he found it overthrown, his mother injured, his beloved Mariamne senseless on the road, the crowd and other vehicles had hastened on. He believed his betrothed love was dead, and bursting into the wailing of despair, beat his bosom, tore his hair, uttered piercing cries, and bending over her, wept in anguish, then seized his

sword, and was on the point of plunging it into his bosom, when Doris grasped his arm: her shrill voice recalled Mariamne to her senses, who after looking wildly for a moment, saw Herod by the light of a half extinguished torch, endeavouring to disentangle himself from Doris that he might slay himself. Fear gave her power, she leaped up, and called aloud,

"Herod, Herod, in the name of God forbear. Thou shalt do no murder—trust in Him and He will deliver us."

As she spoke she bounded forward and clung to his arm. The sword fell from his grasp, and his head bent on Mariamne's bosom. She roused him by saying;

"Tetrarch, the enemy will be on us, save us from death and dishonour."

The words awoke him, he grasped again his sword, called for his men, placed watchmen around, then with eager haste raised the broken vehicle, replaced the injured horses by others, attended to his mother, and pushed forward to join the cavalcade. The night was dark, and as he neared his band voices were heard on the hill,

and more brands and darts were thrown. The road was in places blocked by dying animals and broken carriages, while groans and tears from beings shrouded by the night, told too truly that the foe had done the work of death. They met many a woman going back to seek her dying or wounded husband, or found them remaining by their friends and children who could not go forward.

His vigorous repulse, and the gallantry of his guards stopped the many attempts made on them before the morning broke.

The earliest light discovered the foremost men as they emerged from a dark and narrow defile to a champaigne country; their horses were at first in the deep shadow of a vineyard skirting the road, their spears reaching above the vines refracted from their polished points the level beams, then rays bursting through the clouds penetrated the light foliage, and chequered the warlike band with tender light. After them came toiling on the long array of loaded vehicles, lines of burthened animals, and tired women with their families. The heavy and unvarying

tread of the travellers and carriages was broken by wailing cries of those who had lost their friends during the attacks, or missed their children; at intervals these solemn sounds were contrasted with the joyful cries of the selfish animals, who regardless of all but themselves, hailed the fresh odours from the dewy herbage.

The silent morning hastened on without being decked in its usual bright and varied hues; at length the sun shone on the long train of weary wanderers: when the day had advanced orders were given to encamp near a brook beneath the shade of palm trees mingled with the vine.

The thirsty animals, the wounded, and the tired hastened to quaff the cool and limpid waters. As soon as their outer garments were spread, many groups were formed, some returning thanks for their deliverance, others heaping dust upon their heads and bewailing their dead companions with loud lament.

The vigilant Herod placed his centinels, sent out his scouts, and gave every necessary direction before he even sought the tent where his mother, Mariamne, and the other women were

assembled. After providing for their comfort, he walked through the encampment, cheering some, rewarding others, and inspiring confidence in all. His success and the excitation had elated him, he now felt secure from pursuit, and hoped in a short time to meet his brother-in-law Joseph with an army posted at Ressa.

For some hours the whole body rested; as soon as the heat of the day had passed they pursued their weary march until night, when they again halted, and slept secure under the vigilant guardianship of their leader. The following morning the centinels made known the approach of Joseph with the troops from Ressa. As their strength was then made greater than any that could be brought by Antigonus, they proceeded joyfully towards their destination.

Towards the evening of the fifth day the rock and fortress of Massada was descried from the summit of a hill which they had reached. As the sun was setting they approached it. On one side the craggy steep was surmounted by walls and towers, beneath which were gardens hanging to the sides; on many projecting rocks smaller

works of defence had been raised flanked by watch-towers both circular and square, this eastern aspect was sinking into clear deep shadows. The western side rose almost perpendicularly from the plain to the height of several hundred feet, fenced on the edge by a wall and many towers, from thence was a gentle acclivity adorned with dwellings, sheltered by spreading foliage and vines; above this broad and beautiful slope was the extensive citadel, composed of an enormous central tower an hundred feet above masses of buildings of various forms and ages erected around it. The setting sun glanced the full power of its golden beams on these rugged precipices, smiling gardens, habitations, and commanding fortress, making one broad gleam graduating into every degree of reflected light and shadow as it met the various forms of the enormous pile. The distant plain was intersected by the declining rays as they burst from beneath a bank of floating clouds, varying from gold and crimson to hues of purple softening into tints that mingled with the ætherial blue. The bold and numerous forms of a range of mountains bounding the

plain were clearly defined by the dark edges relieved from the sky, while here and there a lofty peak was illumined by the parting ray.

From the fortress were seen the horsemen and marshalled bowmen entering the shadow cast by the mountain, while beyond them the light played on the long train, and tinged both men and animals with its sunset colours. It was night before the rearmost entered the gateway. The busy throngs were occupied in erecting tents, obtaining possession of buildings, and converting the niches of the walls into temporary habitations. Numberless fires were kindled, whose flickering flames lighted up the sunburnt faces of those providing the food for their companions or labouring to raise some shelter from the dews for their wives and little ones.

CHAPTER VI.

SALOME's suspicion had been excited by the conduct of Mariamne towards her the night of their flight from the Palace; it had the usual effect of increasing the hatred she had engendered for the injured Princess, and was also productive of more active reflections on the readiest mode of sacrificing her.

Although she associated with Alexandra, and found her opinions on their leaving Jerusalem accord with her own, and that the glories of the world were her ruling passion, she was unable to draw from her any information relative to Mariamne.

Herod was too actively employed in disbanding those troops he could not maintain in Massada, in affairs relating to his government, in the proceedings of Antigonus, and in devising plans to obtain the liberation of Hyrcanus and Phasaelus, to be capable of passing much of his

time even with the betrothed Mariamne. She had lived in retirement since her arrival, owing to indisposition from excess of fatigue, and the injury she had sustained on the night of the attack.

A week had elapsed without the return of any messenger with intelligence of importance, when Aulenus came to Herod with the news of Antony's having been at Damascus, and of his being then on his way to Tyre, where a numerous body of Jews had assembled to lay before the Triumvir fresh complaints against him and his brother. Herod saw the necessity of hastening there to refute them, although he knew that the Triumvir was favourably disposed towards him. He was unwilling to leave Massada, and determined not to permit Aulenus to remain without him.

His first wish was to consummate his marriage with Mariamne, but his proposal was answered by a calm reference to his oath. He knew that she was very apprehensive of the conduct of Antony; and was consequently in doubt of the reasons of her conduct, since he could not conceive that she entertained any serious objection to the alliance on account of Doris.

While in this state of perplexity, the Arab Babarrah returned from Egypt. The Tetrarch's first direction to him was, not to make known from whence he had come, and if questioned, to say that he had been sent to the King of Arabia to claim the payment of a debt which he owed to the Tetrarch's father.

Dermah the wife of Babarrah and Tezellah were known to each other; some kind offices of the former had won the affection and confidence of the latter, who communicated to her all that she had overheard. Dermah possessed herself a high and noble spirit, and felt an instinctive confidence in the Princess, as well as a firm determination to protect her against the machinations of her enemies. She often saw her alone, and once, with that decision and openness, which is a leading characteristic of a superior mind, told her not only what Tezellah had overheard, but what she had seen transpire between Aulenus and Salome since their arrival at Massada. Mariamne quickly perceived that the Arab had a soul more congenial to her own, than any other person in her train, and without hesitation com-

municated to her the tale of the wounded soldier. The Arab directly accused Salome as the person in whom the infernal scheme had originated, and warned the Princess not only to mistrust her, but to be most cautious of Doris, whom she saw was an instrument in her hands. Dermah's husband was of a nature similar to his wife's, but more cool in action, and capable of the deepest policy, but which ability he scorned to use but when he could defend the oppressed against the wicked, who were proof against all other appeal. They had entire and mutual confidence, and told to each other their most secret thoughts as freely as if they were merely reflecting on them. He, as soon as they were alone, made known to her every thing that had occurred to him in Egypt; she on the other hand expressed all her anxiety for the welfare of Mariamne, and her suspicions of Aulenus. He was faithful to Herod, and possessed too much manliness of spirit, not to feel eager to snatch a young and innocent victim from the grasp of so powerful a profligate as Antony, and so selfish a pander as Aulenus; he was equally afraid of

Salome, since he was well aware of her influence over her brother, and of her perfidious and revengeful nature. He was intimate with Aulenus, and on meeting him the following morning, was thus accosted by him.

"Peace be with you, and may prayer be your thought's companion—So long have we been separated, that I began to doubt if you would return from Egypt."

"Fidelity and truth keep you, Aulenus, with all their attendant blessings. Your doubts were not misplaced, for I could not return from whence I never had gone."

"That saying is as true, as that Antony is at Tyre," replied Aulenus.

"Which is as true perchance, as that we are at Massada. What brought us here is more doubtful."

"My explanation Babarrah would be, that Antigonus with the restless Parthians drove us from Jerusalem."

"Aulenus you are as profound as a Pharisee, and I suppose in addition to what you see, take for truth what you have heard by tradition"

" I see the Tetrarch, his family, friends, and soldiers here, and learn from every mouth that you all fled from Antigonus."

" Why Herod might have returned to Daphne, and left his adherents to the pleasures of Jerusalem, if that had been the only reason; I have been to Arabia where there is sand enough, and little intelligence."

Aulenus with more seriousness continued;

" Babarrah, our friend and master is much altered of late—He is sometimes as it were under the effect of some charm, for he is not so uniformly active as he was. Sometimes he is thoughtful, he whined over his wounded horse the other day, as a girl would have done over a dead gazelle, he has not sent a soul to see what the other world contains these three months, save some score of Parthians that came capering at his heels when he left Jerusalem."

" And no cause for all this?"

" Babarrah, you and I are old comrades, and have seen strange doings in our time, and more Generals than one made to repeat the farce of Hercules and Omphale; perhaps we may have a

dramatic interlude here, to make up for the loss of feasts and music, things, and pleasant ones, much in vogue at Jerusalem."

"When they're not fighting, or turning their noble and godlike laws into unintelligible jargon; but who are the dramatis personæ here?"

Aulenus gaily answered;

"Had you been here five hours longer, and asked me that question, I should have thought you at your old game of satirising the fools about you—but I suppose you have been dallying elsewhere, and so have not seen what I perceive is going on."

"Friend, be more serious, your penetration I know well, and have good reason for thinking your surmises approach nearer to proofs, than the declarations of others, more particularly on points like these."

"You and I Babarrah can converse on such matters, but babblers must not hear it from any as much with Herod as we are. Babarrah, he is in love with the Asmonean girl, who is as proud and cunning as ever was the most notorious of her tribe—She has another wooer, whom she would prefer, if

something like stratagem or force could gloss over her living with a worshipper of Jupiter, or Venus, or any other fanciful deity."

"This is more than I expected.—Who is this successful wooer of the proud Asmonean?"

"Who could win her but Antony? When but a child she saw him, and now talks of his caresses, and noble mien. These women, Babarrah, from their cradles, cry nothing but coo, coo, and like bright plumage from the moment their eyes are opened till they are closed, even after, they will be decorated, to rot in silks and odours."

"Cage them, cage them all; what say you Aulenus to that? Methinks you would then be forced to marry, and become like Hercules, as too many of us are."

"They mar or make us—It is our fault if our fortunes should be marred by this Herod crossing the Triumvir's fancy; think you not so?"

Babarrah replied; "We should not, if we can avoid it, suffer our hopes to be blasted by such things; if two so great contend on such a point, how can we help ourselves?"

"I have served with Antony, and so may

serve again; but I owe much to Herod, as you do, Babarrah, and would fain repay it in some way, by privately shielding him from the danger which overhangs him, and which we know he will pull down on his head, with fierce and reckless hand. My plan is to please the Princess and Antony,—by giving her to him with just as much stratagem and force as this coy cooing damsel may require."

Babarrah with assumed gravity said;

"It is a kind and bold design,—to at once serve our master—thwart his unwise passion —please the pretty Princess and the Triumvir— and, by so doing, save Herod's life to do us good. A great undertaking may be stated in few words; but will take a world of time, and trouble, and danger, to effect it.—Perhaps you have matured your thoughts on it."

"Not yet:—But who comes here?—it is the Tetrarch's messenger."

The messenger approaching, took Babarrah's hand; and after kissing it, placed it on his forehead. The Arab acknowledged the respectful salute, by touching his own fingers with his lips. The messenger said;

" May success attend you both ;" then addressed Babarrah—

" May my message bear you to happiness. The Tetrarch commands your immediate attendance: he has, it is said, received sad information of Antigonus cruel conduct."

He followed the messenger; and as he went, pondered on Aulenus villany, and resolved to tell his master, and to counterplot him.

As soon as he entered the apartment, where Herod sat on a cushion near a corner of the room, he took off his sandals, and made obeisance. The Tetrarch bade the attendants to retire; then made him sit near, and said;

" Babarrah, I know that in you is truth and courage. Dangers are gathering round me, both in my home and abroad, as if they would beset the road, that is open before me, to glory and power. Antigonus has cut off Hyrcanus ears, as if he were a mangy cur, and so unfitted him for the priesthood. He will murder my brother if he dares; but if he does, he may think of Malichus and vengeance. Their law sayeth, the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer

when he meeteth him. The factious Jews are going in tribes to tell Antony base lies of me and Phasaelus, their protectors. I must be there; and yet I have reasons for wishing to stay here. Did you not say that Cleopatra intended to hasten to Tyre?"

"She did say so. Had you not commanded me to attend you, I should have come without your summons; for I have just learnt from that selfish wretch Aulenus much that you should know. But as our safety mainly depends upon our caution, your slave wishing that the dew of joy may cool your beard, trusts that your just indignation may be for a time suspended, so that gladness may fill your heart, and the punishment of your enemies make you rejoice."

As he spoke, the impatient Herod fixed his stern gaze on the calm Arab, and drew deep inspirations, then eagerly said;

"Thou impenetrable diamond, what would I give to be as firm and pure as thou art. I know that I must, if I would succeed, listen to you,—and, though your master, implicitly obey you. —Babarrah, thou and thine art free:—here's

my garment wherewith to clothe you, and thou shalt have gold to take thee to thy silent deserts, where Romans cannot rule, where rabbis cannot wag their lying tongues, and where no Antonies and longing harlots can bask and feast while thousands die, and justice stands trembling at the guilty balance, making poor virtue seem void of weight:—where there is nothing save the pure sky above you, and the inanimate earth beneath.—I am sick of man, though I would rule him for his good. But what has this grateful friend Aulenus plotted against his benefactor?"

Babarrah then repeated what had passed. Herod sprung from his seat, seized his sword, and was on the point of rushing out, and in his fury, wreaking his vengeance, when Babarrah rose, and standing in his passage, looked on him with an expression in which contempt was scarcely quite suppressed, while he said, in a subdued yet emphatic voice—

"Shall I bid the Triumvir come here with his legions, to block your way to happiness?"

Herod stopped; and trembling with agitation,

placed his hand on the Arab's shoulder, while he articulated;

"Such villainous ingratitude and treachery—I'll slay him by my soul—I'll slay the base pandering traitor."

He tried to rush past Babarrah, who sprung towards the entrance;—on which the furious man exclaimed;

"What, stop me from going?—You are not leagued with him, are you?"

The Arab, looking fiercely at him, replied;

"Not even the Tetrarch shall receive an answer to such a question.—If it pleases you,—go."

He stood back, keeping his eye fixed on Herod, who, checking his steps, said hastily;

"Had your Arab blood been roused by a plot for the dishonour of your wife, you would have felt what I now do."

"I would have ensured vengeance by not appearing to feel until I had provided for her safety; and I would not have insulted my friend, the guardian of my honour, for standing between me and the exhibition of useless, but natural

wrath. I am your faithful Arab, and cannot brook an insult even from a Tetrarch; for I, before the cruel Ethiopian at one tiger-like spring, carried off or slew my tribe, was an Emir."

The dignity and collected words of Babarrah, restored Herod to a calmer state, who, after walking many times the length of the apartment, said;

"Babarrah, I have erred; but could you feel for one minute the fires that burn within me, you would pity me. I have heard of good and evil spirits. I can compare the workings of my soul to two legions of them—one good—one evil; each has possession of a share of my thoughts: one, all the good; the other, all the bad: and these spirits are ever contending for the mastery. And alas, the ground occupied by the evil, seems the strongest. Were you with me always, or one who seems a guardian angel, I should get the vantage ground of the accursed legion."

He sat down, and forcing a smile to his face, said,

"Come, proud Emir, and sit beside your brother Tetrarch, and tell him what he shall do."

Babarrah directly replied;

" First counterplot him, next use him as a tool to work your own ends, and having done so, let him suffer a traitor's doom."

A smile of admiration and pleasure played on the Tetrarch's face and he hastily asked;

" How shall we counterplot him?"

" By fooling Antony; but as the means are difficult since the dupe is above the herd, they must be thought of with calmness. First, Cleopatra must go unknown to Tyre. Let Aulenus tell Antony that Mariamne's health requires to be renovated by sea air, and that she is coming too. With your permission I will to Egypt forthwith, but that must not be known to any but ourselves, and my wife, on whom we may depend. When circumstances are ready for farther action, we can proceed. The Princess will soon recover at Massada. Have I your permission to depart?"

The Tetrarch embraced him as he laughed with savage joy, perceiving the scheme of the crafty yet noble Arab. He departed at sunset.

If Babarrah's rules of virtue were not as re-

fined as ours are, it must be remembered, that the laws by which he regulated his conduct were not like ours; he knew but imperfectly the divine covenant of the Jews, then corrupted by vain interpretations; his habits, the state of the society by which he was surrounded, will account for his falling short of our perfect standard.

Dermah had received instructions from her husband Babarrah before he set off, and purposely placed herself in the way of Aulenus, that she might pursue the plan which he hoped to execute.

He met her in the garden near the Palace, and immediately accosted her;

"Dermah, may the wings of guardian angels ever shadow thee; and may thy beauty outlive the destroyer Time."

"Virtue and valour guide thee, Aulenus."

"We have not met of late, and yet you seem eager to pass me without our usual friendly communication."

"If I were not pressed for time to execute some urgent business I should not be so desirous

of leaving you without some enquiries after your welfare, and seeking some intelligence of what is going on at Antioch. My spirits too are damped, for Babarrah has set out again on a mission to Arabia."

"To Arabia again? Does he seek assistance from his master to dispossess Antigonus?"

"I know not; but I must leave you to attend the Princess, whose health has been so much affected that in a short time she will go to Tyre to enjoy the breezes from the sea."

"What say you Dermah, the Princess going to Tyre? Who accompanies her?"

"Her mother and Salome, but I suppose that as Herod is going to refute the charges to be again preferred against him, that he will escort them. I must be gone, or my duty may be questioned—honour and triumph attend you."

Although he attempted to continue the conversation she left him, and ascending the steps which led to the part of the fortress where Mariamne dwelt, proceeded to the apartment of the Princess. She held some conversation with her,

which was ended by the entrance of Salome and Doris, who came to enquire after her health.

Dermah, though purchased from the Ethiopians, who had destroyed her tribe, was allowed, in consideration of her former rank, to be on the footing of a companion rather than of a slave. She saw the great advantage of detaining Salome until it was too late for her to meet Aulenus, whom she hoped and believed would set out for Tyre the following morning, to communicate to the Triumvir what he had heard of the intended movements of the Princess.

She kept them listening to her suggestions of the object of her husband's journey to the Arabian king; to her accounts of the cruel indignities offered to Hyrcanus, of the state of Jerusalem, and other topics of equal interest, until the night had so far advanced that she knew no one could pass the barrier gate. After their departure Mariamne half rebuked her for detaining them. The Arabian woman smiled and told her that they were far better safely lodged under their eyes, than wandering where they might

work her evil! Mariamne not having any suspicion of what was going on made no remark, for she felt confidence in the fidelity and attachment of Dermah. Aulenus set out on the following day for Tyre as she fully expected.

CHAPTER VII.

The sudden and unexpected flight from Jerusalem had frustrated, in a great degree, the heartless intentions of Salome, and completely destroyed the hope she had cherished of placing Mariamne in the power of Antigonus, with the conviction that he would exchange her with Antony for the crown of Judæa. Her disappointments of vengeance only made her mind more active in devising schemes to gratify it. Although she found it easy to delude the gentle Doris, she knew that it would be impossible to make her subservient to her schemes against the Princess; so merely kept her suspicion alive, and used her as a means of attempting to learn her opinions and feelings. Doris mind was too highly excited by her having caused the defection of her

husband's love not to be ready to imbibe the false estimate of all her words and actions stated by Salome.

There were times when Doris gentler feelings excited doubts of Salome's opinion, and taught her to form more correct conclusions on the conduct of the Princess, and even to pardon Herod for loving her: when Salome, with artful sophistry, placed her conduct in lights which weakened those conclusions, and taught her to consider Mariamne as her enemy, and the woman who had unjustly deprived her of the love of the man she adored and had married, and who would rob her child of his birth-right, these charitable feelings were whelmed in a flood of envious and bitter tears, and she became for a season as inexorable as her cold and spiteful instructor.

Herod was cautious in his manner to his beloved Mariamne when in the presence of others, but so ardent were his expressions of affection, so continued his entreaties to marry, that it required all her fortitude and sense to restrain him from pursuing his applications. She avoided, as much as possible, being alone, and when with

him she cautiously refrained from discussion, but made him clearly perceive, that his attempts would tend to lower him in her estimation, which from the love he bore for her he could not endure. More than once she was compelled to make a solemn appeal to the oath he had taken, and even to infer that her promise of marriage was conditional.

Alexandra appeared to favour Herod's desire to marry, while she secretly instigated her daughter to adhere to her determination. This line she pursued, not from a love of her child, or a dislike to the Tetrarch, but having discovered his prodigality in gifts, she knew that she should reap the greatest benefit by keeping them as long as possible in that state. She paid but little attention to Salome, as she was certain of her dislike, and fear of her daughter. She was too indifferent to examine farther Salome's motives, yet followed a course as hostile to her views, as if she had scrutinized her character and conduct with precision.

Alexandra had not been told of the discoveries made by Tezellah and Dermah. Mariamne's

silence on the subject, arose from a conviction, that it would only lead to the most dangerous kind of hostility between her mother and Salome, and from a belief that the unprincipled subtilty of the latter, would excite doubts in the mind of Herod of the truth of her informants, and perhaps terminate in misery to them. She had accidentally seen Aulenus, and her fears concerning Antony were renewed. She saw that her surest refuge would be in marriage, yet she revolted at submitting to the custom of her people, and becoming the wife of a man already bound to another woman. With just and noble feelings she made every allowance for Doris manner to her, and often attempted to excite confidence in the mind of the neglected wife, but she found it impossible, and perceived that every promise of success, was blighted by some foreign and sinister influence, which she could not avoid concluding to be derived from Salome. Her griefs were increased by hearing of the cruel indignity practised on Hyrcanus, not only because she had great affection for him, and a lively recollection of all his kindness, but because it left the High

Priesthood to be filled by Antigonus, which might retard or prevent the accession of her brother to that dignity. The attempts to obtain the political jurisdiction of Judæa, she knew would be fierce, and numerous, and dreaded lest he should fall a sacrifice to some jealous competitor. The ambition of Herod made her apprehensive for his safety, and sometimes mistrustful of the manner in which he would use the power lately vested in him, (when he possessed it) over her country. The words of the wounded soldier haunted her mind, like the recollection of a phantom that had visited her in a vision of the night. She sought for protection where it is only to be found, and waited patiently for the assistance for which she prayed.

Although Herod's love had long been the pervading passion of his soul, it was blended in his thoughts with objects of ambition and power. He was on the most friendly terms with the Triumvir, the political affairs of the Jews were entrusted to him, Antigonus was hated by Antony, and he often indulged the hope, that he should be able to drive him from Jerusalem, and assume

the chief command. His devotion for Mariamne, led him to picture to his imagination a pageant of noble actions; such as being instrumental in making Aristobulus the High Priest, and ruler of the nation, while he, as his brother-in-law, assisted him in the cares of government, and commanded his army: he fancied himself adored by Mariamne, as the preserver and supporter of her family, and beheld her yield herself to him as his willing bride.

He then little suspected that these ennobling thoughts were to be opposed by jealousy, revenge, ambition, vanity, and unbounded love of power; that he might be placed in circumstances, where the temptation would require the utmost exertion of his natural faculties, improved by contemplation, and dependance on Providence, to resist: he did not consider, that the accidental possession of power, might hurry him on to the commission of actions, which would be followed up by others, and bring on him despair and misery. Love, the inciting monitor to all which is good and great, that heavenly passion, which imbues every other affection with such

celestial fire, that the grosser parts are all subdued, drew the attractive picture he looked on with his mental eye, and coloured it with hues of heaven. He fancied his love would be the means of retaining his authority, and that authority was all he required to recal virtue and happiness to a distracted country.

Such are the dreams of men, and they only can tell the full extent of the vain delusion, who know the weakness of humanity, and the necessity of seeking for help, where there is omnipotent ability to support the frail resolutions, and tottering virtue of weak and erring man.

Herod's mind was too active and vigorous for love only to occupy it; he passed as much of his time as he could in the society of the Princess, and each day was more astonished at her wisdom, and a greater admirer of her piety, and the elevated nature of her soul; the remaining hours were occupied in strengthening his fortress, administering justice, and issuing directions for the governance of his province, and in preparing forces to prosecute the war against Antigonus.

Some weeks elapsed, when Babarrah returned.

Though it was midnight when he arrived, he was admitted, and had an interview with Herod. Early on the following morning, he again departed for Tyre. Dermah alone knew where he had been, and what had transpired. Her countenance did not express satisfaction, yet now and then there played on it a smile as if some jocose thought crossed her mind.

The Tetrarch was unusually animated; and, at times, appeared full of some scheme fraught in his idea with hilarity. Salome and Doris, when they heard of Babarrah's sudden arrival and departure, and observed the excited state of Herod, were certain that something of moment was devised or had occurred; and were most anxious to discover what it was.

While these transactions took place at Massada, Aulenus had informed Antony of the expected arrival of Mariamne at Tyre.

Herod, observing more than usual coldness between the women, availed himself of the circumstance, and took Salome and Doris to Petra, where some affair required his attendance, and left them there with Joseph, Salome's husband,

with directions to him to return to Massada in three weeks, if the affair under his direction was completed. A few days after, a messenger from Massada to Petra enabled Dermah to write to Doris. In this letter she informed her, that the Tetrarch had directed her to prepare to go with him to Tyre, where he intended to take both Mariamne and her mother. No sooner had Salome received this information, than she feigned great anxiety to hear more of Hyrcanus; and proposed to her husband that he should dispatch a courier to Jerusalem. Joseph dared not oppose her wishes, and selected a man for that purpose. Salome sent for the courier; and after rewarding him, bade him pass on to Tyre, without stopping at Jerusalem, and deliver the letter she gave him to Aulenus, whom he knew since he served in the household of Herod. The courier promised implicit obedience, and departed.

But little communication existed between places as remote as those of which we have just spoken; so there was but little probability of Salome's receiving any further information.

Doris gave way to grief and melancholy,

since she concluded that Dermah's intelligence amounted to a declaration of Herod's marriage and her abandonment in that remote fortress. Salome could not avoid anticipating a similar result, though there appeared some probability that her victim might become the prey of Antony.

It was night when Babarrah perceived a small dusky galley approach the shore near Straton's Tower. A skiff was launched from her, and, in a few minutes, was left by the retiring surf on the sand. The men leaped out and dragged her up the shore; when beyond the reach of the sea, two females, closely mantled, were assisted by Babarrah to disembark. He led them in silence from the shore to a house near the beach; and afterwards returned to conduct several others, apparently of less importance.

The door of the court yard was carefully closed, and there was evident mystery in the affair, and curiosity in the women. Babarrah left them. The whole of the succeeding day the gate and lattices were kept carefully closed.

The Arab hastened to Tyre, (where Herod had arrived to refute the fresh complaints made

against him by the partisans of Antigonus,) and on the following morning, while to all appearance looking at the Roman guard prepared to attend the Triumvir, he accosted Aulenus;

"Friend, may the winds of fortune ever blow upon you."

"May the dews and free air of Arabia cherish you."

"Aulenus, have you seen the Tetrarch? I wish to tell him that they are arrived."

"Who's arrived?" he quickly asked;

"I need not mind telling you, as you are an old comrade, and the friend of Herod:—but give me your promise, that you will not mention it."

"You have no cause to doubt my discretion, Babarrah.—In times like these, it were well to have a tried friend with whom to divide one's care; and you know how ready I am to share any toil or danger with you."

"There is truth in what you say; and great is the comfort of being able to obtain the assistance, of such a friend as yourself.—Herod must be here to defend himself against the attacks of the crafty Antigonians.—Whilst he is here, no

doubt Antigonus will, if he is prepared, besiege Massada; therefore, the Tetrarch has sent Salome and a portion of the women to Petra, and brought Mariamne and her mother to Straton's Tower. Were Antigonus followers to hear of their being there, they would attempt to get possession of them; but as the Princess is indisposed, and requires sea air and rest, if they remain quiet, no one will be the wiser.—Aulenus, keep your eye on them; and if any stir arises, we can soon carry them away by sea."

Aulenus replied, with all the apparent frankness of a friend and soldier;

"Had you not told me, Babarrah, I could have quarrelled with you.—I will keep my eye on them; and it shall be my fault if they fall into the hands of the Antigonians.—Where is the house in which they dwell?"

"Know you not the Villa, built by Antipater, close to the margin of the sea?"

"On the Western side of the town, beneath the olive wood?"

"The very same, Aulenus.—Do you not re-

member, when there with me, we both wished to have it."

"Now I am certain of the spot."

Aulenus made some excuse, and bade the Arab farewell.

As he walked away, he smiled with the belief of his own superior cunning, and at having outwitted his comrade. He hastened to Antony with the intelligence he had received; and on his road, devised various methods by which to accomplish his desired end.

Babarrah, on leaving Aulenus, cursed him for his villainy, contemned him for his shallow credulity, and calmly reflected on the surest way of deceiving him still farther.

On the following day, the Jews preferred their complaint against Herod; but Antony not only refused to listen to them, but wishing to rid himself of the presence of the Tetrarch, threatened to inflict on them the severest punishments. His threats were unheeded, and the tumultuous assemblage urged, with factious uproar, their charges against the Tetrarch.

Herod, seeing the rising wrath of Antony,

hastened to try and appease them, and induce them to depart.—His solicitations were treated with scorn; and they renewed, with still greater vehemence, their tumultuous application. The Triumvir, wearied at their importunities, and angry at their insubordinate manner of proceeding, ordered his soldiers to fall on them, and disperse them. His orders were obeyed; and though Herod interceded, many of the Jews were slain, and still more wounded. This severity terminated their endeavours to injure the Tetrarch in the estimation of Antony.

On the following day the Triumvir bestowed on Herod some magnificent gifts, shewed him public marks of his approbation, and dismissed him, with advice to return immediately to Massada, and rely on his friendship. The Tetrarch expressed his gratitude, and prepared to follow his directions.

Babarrah saw him before he left Tyre. As soon as he entered his apartment he exclaimed with unusual hilarity;

"Well Emir, are they safely lodged at Straton's Tower?"

" As surely as that triumph attends thee to crush thine enemies," was the reply.

" If Antony's zeal for me leads him to such summary acts of justice, I shall have no trouble in directing the affairs of Judæa, since we shall have none but women and children to command. Such slaughter is equal to a battle; there were three hundred of the brawling fools killed and wounded, and the whole of them would have shared the same fate if I had not interfered."

" They are there I said, and that foul pander Aulenus in full scent—Tetrarch, if I am the victim of his suspicions, be kind to Dermah, you never loved Mariamne better than I love her; our remaining son is yet a stripling, he has the fire and spirit of his race, and were I to be cut off, would be left unprotected!"

" No, he shall be about my person. Babarrah I like your open manly bearing, confide in me and I will ever be your friend; mistrust me and I am your enemy. Aulenus won my cause to-day and slew my accusers, for he has doubtless whispered to that lustful Roman gallant—'they're at Straton's Tower, Herod removed, and

she is yours.' Were I not to remove he might be so accommodating as to save me all farther trouble and anxiety for this world's affairs by removing me to another. If matters do not turn out well, join me Babarrah at Massada; should we be pent up there by some twenty thousand prating fighting Jews, there is a lady who will lodge you for a time, whom report says favours your attentions."

Babarrah smiled half scornfully and said;

" I will rejoin you at Massada"—

" You may want gold, so there is enough for present circumstances, and I will leave two horses that will soon bear you to this lady if need requires your going—good Babarrah farewell—you have the ciphers, and the three couriers are here, so communicate with me quickly."

The cool Arab bade his master farewell with respectful obeisance, as one who felt his own superiority but yielded it with proud contempt to greater fortunes. He went away, and wandered near the strand communing with himself.

" These are the consequences of dependance. I must dupe a villain instead of scorning and

punishing him—must be the contriver of a plot which I half smile at, half contemn. Well, the Triumvir is a beast at heart—Herod is a being with qualities that adorn a man, though a breath may change the balance and make a monster of him. The Princess is a pure and perfect soul, unsullied by the gross world's contaminating touch, and worthy to have a life risked for her—were I what I was, and my gallant son, who fell when the treacherous Ethiopian came down upon us, was living, I would point out to her the chances of her misery, and if she had loved him—he was beautiful, brave, and gentle—would have wafted her beyond the Tetrarch's or the Roman's reach.—O dreams of visionary bliss—he's gone to other worlds—my son! my son!"

He stood with looks fixed on the breaking surges, and tears unheeded fell from his eyes.

On the following day Babarrah sought Aulenus, and after the usual Eastern salutation thus discoursed with him;

"When do you return to the Tetrarch, Aulenus? If it pleases you we will travel together; there are many here who would be glad to join

us, and as the Parthians are prowling about the land we cannot be too strong a party."

"Babarrah, it has ever been a follower's privilege to change his master, if his inclination or interest prompts him. Herod has served me, but I served him first; my rewards have been no greater than my services demanded; it's true he saved my life when wounded, but I was fighting in his cause, and so could expect no less if the opportunity offered. It so happens that I hate Pharisees and Sadducees, and all the squabbling incomprehensible fellows that he is surrounded by. There is something intelligible in the worship paid at Daphne, and pleasant withal: there is some glory in fighting with the legions of Rome, and something to be gained by following one who has a third of the world to revel in, and who has the happy art of squandering some portion of it: so I intend to thank the Tetrarch, and accept the offer of a command under Antony."

Babarrah after a short silence replied;

"You act as most men and animals do, give your services where you are best rewarded:

people say of dogs and cats, feed them and be kind to them and they will love you—so it is with man, feed him and be kind to him and he will not perhaps love you, but attend on you, and speak well of you, and smile and fawn—cease to feed and caress him and he will deem himself insulted and hate."

"As cynical, yet as sensible as ever—Babarrah I would serve you."

"So would I you."

"If persons are ready to gratify each other, and only require a little stratagem to enable them to fulfil their wishes, what can be more friendly than to plan the means and open the path for them to meet and accomplish their desires?"

"Aulenus there is much truth in what you say."

"Such acknowledgment from you emboldens me to continue, and by so doing offer you fortune and the means of gaining all you want."

"Such an offer is worth labouring to obtain, I listen to you impatiently."

Herod is gone, and has left at Straton's Tower the very woman for whom Antony

would give an empire. I know she loves him, and know that Herod has been fooled by her beauty—I have Herod's interest at heart, and can, while promoting it, serve myself. If the Triumvir was to discover that he stood between him and the possession of his game, what would become of Herod or twenty such? We know, by saving him, pleasing Antony, and gratifying Mariamne, we are sure of fortune."

Babarrah's countenance underwent no change, though he felt inclined to draw his scymitar and slay him for the insult he had offered him by making the proposal: he enquired;

"How are these purposes to be effected?"

"Very simply—we have only to introduce Antony into the villa, and leave the rest to him."

"I understand you; if that is all, the difficulties are not insurmountable; I have access to the inmates at all times; and know the Triumvir's person, you shall conduct him half way, where I will meet you; the remainder devolves on me; I can depend on your good offices afterwards."

Aulenus grasped his hand, overjoyed at his winning so great an ally, then left him to watch

an opportunity for fixing with Antony the hour when he would go to the appointed spot. It was night before he was admitted to the presence. Antony was so excited at the approaching adventure, that he wished to disguise himself and set off immediately. On Aulenus explaining to him the impracticableness of success, he appointed the following evening for the completion of the scheme. He bestowed a heap of gold on Aulenus. The Triumvir's pleasure was encreased from his believing that he had overreached the subtle Herod.

Babarrah on the ensuing morning hastened to Straton's Tower, and prepared the inmates of the villa for the reception of an unknown guest.

Aulenus prepared two fresh horses; the Arab had, at stated distances, two more. As Antony quitted Tyre before day-break he reached the neighbourhood before the sun began to decline. Babarrah led him to a retired dwelling to repose and refresh himself. Soon after sunset they proceeded to the olive grove: although they had not been waiting many minutes the Triumvir's patience began to fail. A small taper exposed

from one of the lattices informed Babarrah that he might approach. He led the way to the door, which was opened by an old woman completely veiled.

Babarrah retired beyond the wall, but did not go far from the villa, and looked and felt as if he was humbling himself in his own esteem. Antony followed the guide, who held a small lamp in her hand, without exchanging a single word. He passed through several rooms richly furnished, but he saw no one in them, nor was there any other light discernible save that which his guide carried: the mysterious silence accorded with his romantic spirit, and added to his pleasure. He entered a long passage hung with drapery; as he approached the door, his guide made a sign to advance with lighter tread. She gently pushed open the door, and Antony saw, reclining on some splendid cushions, a female closely veiled. The guide retired. A softened light, not more than sufficient to direct him to the object of his search, scarcely extended its influence to the remoter parts of the chamber. He advanced and bent his knee to the female,

who appeared much agitated; as he took her hand the light was extinguished, and they were enveloped in darkness.

Before the morning broke Antony was again under the guidance of Babarrah, and returned. Very little passed between them. The Triumvir was evidently pleased, but restless and curious. In the evening he went again to the olive grove, was again admitted and again enveloped in darkness, and returned. On the third evening Babarrah did not appear; Antony waited until the night had advanced, then proceeded alone to the grove: no light could be discerned, he walked to the house, the door was open, he entered, but neither saw nor heard any one: he called, echo repeated the sound; he found his way to the chamber; it was empty, and by the pale moonbeams he observed that nothing had been deranged. He then hastened to the shore, and only saw the moonlight gilding the surface of the ocean, and the billows rolling on the strand. Though he was disappointed and surprised, the character of the adventure pleased him; while ruminating on it he wandered along the shore,

and was recalled from his reverie by the footstep and sudden appearance of a man. Antony at first grasped his dagger, but the age and dress of the intruder removed all apprehension, and he asked the old fisherman if he knew aught of the inhabitants of the villa; he received some, but not enough information to satisfy him. The old man told him, that he had accidentally seen, at night fall, many people leave the house, and soon after a galley put to sea, but the darkness prevented him from ascertaining even which way she steered.

Antony returned to the dwelling and found a tablet on his sword informing him, that his horses would be ready to convey him to Tyre in the morning.

Aulenus met him nearly four leagues from the city, but could give him no insight into the mystery. A few days afterwards affairs of great consequence demanded his presence at Rome.

CHAPTER VIII.

SALOME had returned to Massada before Herod arrived from Tyre, and to her great astonishment found Mariamne there. Her suspicions were more highly excited than before, and she determined to use every effort to discover if she had been purposely made to believe that the Princess had gone to Tyre, that some plot might be carried into effect without her knowledge. She conjectured that Aulenus had been a traitor to her, but as she knew the extent of his selfishness, and want of principle, her doubts of his fidelity were not great. She questioned her brother on the matter, and was told that the violent proceedings of his accusers had prevented his taking her.

Letters by the courier whom she had dis-

patched from Petra, or information from Aulenus himself, were now looked for by her with great anxiety. She instructed Doris to obtain all the information she could, and closely examined Dermah and Tezellah: from them she learnt, that during the absence of Herod, the Princess had seldom left her apartments, and then only to walk with her brother on the terrace. No other persons of the household could tell her whether Mariamne had been at Massada during the whole of her absence. While Salome was in this state of perplexity, the courier returned, and brought her a short letter from Aulenus, informing her that her opinion had been correct, for the Princess love for Antony was so great, that she had with the assistance of Babarrah admitted him to her villa, but had mysteriously left it as soon as she heard of Herod's return to Massada.

Salome's delight at this intelligence was with difficulty restrained within sufficient bounds to prevent her immediately accusing her to Herod. She would have done so, if she had not been eager to barb her vengeance with the anguish of suspense, and the torture of a proud spirit at

the anticipation of exposure. Her manner towards the Princess assumed a contemptuous carelessness, and she often referred when in her company, to the pleasures afforded by a temporary residence near the sea, and the gratification it was possible to obtain when so situated, and not under restraint. When she thus conversed within hearing of the Princess, her eye was constantly turned towards her, to see, if she could discover from her countenance, the inward workings of a tortured mind : to her surprize she discovered no change, her brow still wore the fair hue and placid character of dignified and gentle self-possession, her eye was as usual tinged with melancholy and thoughtfulness. Salome was so blinded by malice, and the desire of revenge, that she did not doubt from Mariamne's unchanging countenance, that her conclusions of her guilt might be without foundation : she only saw in the Princess calmness, the depth of duplicity, and the determination of denial. She resolved to overwhelm her by one great attack. The first measure she took was to leave Aulenus letter where she knew Herod would see it, al-

most at the same moment that she entered Mariamne's private apartment, to proclaim to her the information she had gained.

To the Princess great astonishment, the vengeful woman entered her room, without the usual ceremonies, and immediately thus addressed her.

"So I was to be banished to Petra, and afterwards to be duped into the belief, that you had not been from Massada—When wanton"—

As this word passed her lips, Dermah stood between them, and exclaimed;

"It was I who told you that the Princess was going to Tyre—the information I received from the Tetrarch—but she has not quitted Massada."

The scornful and determined manner of Dermah overawed even Salome, and while she stood wondering at her words, and sudden appearance, the Arab woman darted on her a look of indignant contempt and walked away. Mariamne heard and saw what passed, without being more than startled at the suddenness and violence of the intrusion; with a calm unchanging manner and countenance she said, as she waved her arm;

"Your accusation and language must have been intended for some poor slave—You could not thus intend to intrude on, and insult *me*, I beg you to leave the apartment."

Salome closed her teeth, some burning tears of passion forced their way to her eyes, as she obeyed the irresistible yet gently delivered mandate. As she sought her room, she passed the apartment of her brother, and entered it to see if the letter she had put there had been left unread: she found it where it had been placed, and at the same time heard from Doris that Herod had been in the room. Her perplexity was by this fact wrought to its height, and added to her vexation, disappointment, and discomfiture. Sometimes she paced her room, with rapid steps, at other times, she sat down as if exhausted with rage and doubt, and often hot tears traced each other down her cheeks. While in this perturbed state, Tezellah came in exclaiming;

"Babarrah has just rode into the fortress wounded, with the intelligence of Aulenus being killed by some of the remains of Hezekiah's bandits."

Salome started from her seat, and asked with great agitation;

"What say'st thou? Aulenus killed, when in company with Babarrah?"

"The whole fortress is in agitation, and Babarrah has been summoned by the Tetrarch to inform him of the truth."

"Go Tezellah, and bring me all the information you can obtain, do not loiter, but go."

No sooner had Tezellah departed, than she clenched her hand, drew a deep inspiration, and for a moment seemed lost in amazement—then in a fierce and subdued tone, said;

"There's treachery in it—Babarrah, the cool, proud, unfearing Babarrah has used him for a tool, and having used him, has slain him—I will avenge his death—He could have told me more—She has never been from here—That subtle Arab has duped him and me—Both she and Herod knew this plot, and now this cursed Asmonean treats me as a slave, and laughs me to scorn—There's Dermah too in league with them—By all the Dæmons of Gehennah; by all the fires of Hinnom, I will yet avenge myself, and

bring that proud wanton down to mourn in dust and ashes, and then I will taunt and scorn her with all the bitterness her insolence deserves."

She gnashed her teeth, and while her cheek became flushed, and her eyes sparkling with fury, laughed hysterically as she strode about the room. Her ear caught the sound of footsteps approaching; she endeavoured to compose herself, and sat down. It proved to be her husband, he looked on her with astonishment, then said;

"What now Salome? you appear disturbed."

"Well I may be—Joseph, I will not bear another hour the insolence of that proud overbearing Asmonean—I tell you that I will not—She knows as well as we all do—only *you* are too blind to see it—that Herod loves her, and so lords it over us, as if we were the captured offspring of some heathen, as if we were not good enough to be her slaves—I say again, I will not bear it—Herod may love her, and so does some one else—He shall not be her dupe, Ill trace her to——"

"Be not so violent—I will see to it, I will speak to Herod, in the mean time compose yourself."

She was on the point of giving way to her rage, when Tezellah returned.—Joseph availed himself of the opportunity and departed, for he feared Salome far more than an enemy at the gates.

Tezellah appeared not to notice her perturbation, and said;

"The Tetrarch is going away to-night. He has made Babarrah the chief officer under Joseph. Not a minute since, he sent to request permission to speak to Alexandra and Mariamne, he is in a dreadful agitation, and every one though flying to obey him, is chided, and threatened—He has been with Doris for some time this morning, and I saw her weeping—You can soothe him more than any one, pray go and try."

Salome listened, and wonder at what she heard went far towards recalling her almost maddened mind to a more collected state, she bade her go and find out where the Tetrarch was, then cooled her face with water, ar-

ranged her dress, and prepared to see her brother.

She watched him leave the rampart after a short but earnest conversation with Babarrah, and accosted him as he entered;

"Peace and happiness attend you, my beloved brother; Is it true that we have lost our faithful friend Aulenus?

Herod had always been accustomed to pay attention to Salome, and to hold her opinion in high estimation, and even then could not bring himself to believe, that she intended to do any thing injurious to him; he replied with an angry look and voice;

"Aulenus is dead; tell me not of his fidelity, he would have slain me to please Antony."

She hesitated, then in a sorrowful manner said;

"Alas, poor Aulenus has found some traducer too—perhaps he knew too much, and came to his friend and master too quickly to tell it him, and so——perished by the way."

Herod angrily replied; "Perchance he might have hastened to tell me what he thought he

knew, and what he, like a villain, and a pander, plotted."

" Surely Aulenus, the valiant Aulenus could not have plotted aught against you—How came you to know of his supposed treachery?"

" His villainy is not supposed ; as sure as ever our father Abraham lived, so sure was he a traitor, a most foul and villainous traitor."

" You are seldom wrong, but if Aulenus was a traitor, then is confidence destroyed, for a more open, noble soldier is not to be found in your service, but say, how came you acquainted with his treachery ; did any *friend* betray him ?"

The Tetrarch turned suddenly, and said with uncommon force ;

" Yes—Babarrah made known to me his treachery, and I know that he was a traitor also to you"—

" Salome's breath was suspended for a moment, and the blood forsook her cheek, but recovering herself, she replied ;

" He cannot be a traitor, who has nothing to betray; enemies may fabricate for the purpose of destroying those they hate, or who stand in their

way—If aught prejudicial to my honour has been said, it must have arisen from my jealous affection for you—Did you not say that Babarrah had made known to you, his former friend Aulenus conduct?—Who was with Aulenus when he perished?"

" Babarrah."

Salome fixed her look on Herod, and asked ;

" No one but Babarrah ?"

A thought seemed to cross his brow, when he answered ;

" No—no one but Babarrah."

" The sole accuser of Aulenus was with him when he was killed—Perhaps the accuser was the plotter, and poor Aulenus was the dupe—Herod beware"—

Herod thought for a minutes space, then emphatically exclaimed ;

" He was no dupe, but to his own device, he was the plotter of a foul scheme—I tell you that he was a traitor, and that Babarrah is the best and truest friend I have."

Salome remarked with affected gentleness ;

" I never heard many reports of one person,

which had not some foundation for them—It is so said of woman, that many reports amount to proof."

Herod as if apprehending her reference, said with violence of gesture and voice;

"That which is impossible, can never be proved—Again I tell you Aulenus was a villain, and that I would have punished him with death, if some of Hezekiah's ruffians had not saved me the trouble."

Salome asked him in a tone partaking of irony;

"Were there any Arabs among the ruffians?"

Herod annoyed and angry, fiercely replied;

"Some female dupe might have accelerated his ruin—But enough of this useless prattle; I leave the fortress to-night, so farewell."

Salome did not stop him, she knew him too well to cross the lion in his rage, and she knew also that the reason for Aulenus death would often cross her brother's mind—She embraced, and left him.

Babarrah had witnessed this interview, and even caught a few of the expressions used by

both of them, and was apprehensive of the result, for he was well aware of the ascendancy Salome possessed over her brother. He went to Dermah, who saw as well as he did the precipice on which they stood. Both were determined to continue their protection over Mariamne, though at the risk of their own lives.

In the evening the Tetrarch left Massada for Arabia, with the intention of soliciting the loan of a sufficient sum, wherewith to purchase his brother Phasaelus freedom, and also a body of troops to carry on the war against Antigonus who had been inaugurated King of Jerusalem.

Herod had taken an affectionate leave of Mariamne, and bade her trust to Babarrah in case any thing should occur. There was more concern and agitation in his manner than she had ever before observed, which, with the conduct of Salome, and the death of Aulenus, created in her sad forebodings, and greatly depressed her. She was seated at an open lattice, watching the last waning hues, left by the setting sun fading into night, like hopes which had once filled the heart with warmth and joy all clouded by the approach-

ing hand of death, when the wailing of a female reached her. The cry of woe, or the tear of pity, were never unheeded by her; for the first her heart bled, with the latter she sympathized; but why, she could not tell.

Her voice summoned an attendant, from whom she desired to know who the sufferer was, and the cause of her grief. The attendant not returning quickly, she followed the direction of the sound, and entered the apartment of Doris, who at first did not perceive the Princess, but cried;

"O that I had been like Rachael, and died as I called him the child of sorrow; for he was born to bring sorrow on himself and his mother. —They have taken him away, and I have no son to keep my name in remembrance. Let them cast me out like Hagar; but let my son— my first-born—my only son, be with me."

The Princess knelt by her side, and with consoling voice asked her why she wept and who had taken away her child? The unhappy woman threw back the mantle with which she had covered her face, and looking, with

anguish depicted on her brow, at Mariamne, cried;

"The master of the flock hath carried away the goodly kid, that the mother may mourn, and follow, and leave the pasture to a fairer hind; one that cannot consent to share her master's home; but priding herself on her beauty, demands all his protection and care."

Again she wept bitterly and covered her face. Mariamne, whose tears fell silently and fast, knew not what answer to make; for Salome stood near watching her, and not far off were Dermah and Tezellah. She could only try to pacify her by assurances of her being in error; and kind entreaties not to yield to grief. Doris had been too highly wrought, by various circumstances, to have the power of restraining herself, and she again burst out;

"O daughter of my people, I will gird me with sackcloth, and wallow myself with ashes: I mourn for an only son.—O a spoiler hath suddenly come upon me."

She bowed herself to the earth, and, in the depth of humiliation, exclaimed;

" O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid."

Mariamne, as if inspired, repeated her prayer; and, clasping the afflicted mother, said with an entreating voice;

" Doris, O Doris trust me;—I will never cease importuning Herod to restore thy son. Tell me why, and where he has taken him?"

She did not attempt to break from her embrace, but said;

" He has taken him to Arabia,—to that faithless king, to leave him as a pledge for the wealth he wants:—Malchus will bring him up an idolater, and he will be cut off from among his people.—O my son, my son."

It was in vain they tried to pacify her. She wept and prayed and uttered cries of woe during the greater part of the night; towards morning she sunk to sleep, but when her attendant woke, she was gone. The strictest search was made for her, but in vain. No one had seen her pass the barrier. Mariamne's grief and fear were great; and presuming on her rank, she sum-

moned Joseph and Babarrah, and asked their counsel. Joseph proposed to send immediately to Herod.

Babarrah advised that an hundred horsemen should be sent out, with orders to each to perform a certain circuit; and if they found the unhappy woman, to bring her back with them.

Mariamne, though aware of her danger, immediately requested Babarrah to head the troop, and set off: promising at the same time a great reward to the successful man.

This proposition was embraced, and the horsemen sallied forth.

Salome watched the departure of Babarrah with fiendish pleasure, since it removed the most watchful guardian of the Princess. She thought at the same time that the cause of Aulenus death, and Doris disappearance, might be the same; for she only saw in Mariamne the proud and subtle Asmonean who had injured her, and to whom she had committed herself, and who was consequently her enemy. She judged, as is too often the case, another by herself.

No sooner were Babarrah and his horsemen

out of sight, than she sought for her husband, who had then the chief command of the fortress. She questioned him on the loss of Doris, and endeavoured to make him comprehend, by her inferences, that she might have been made away with. She elicited from him all that had passed with the Princess. When he told her, that she over-ruled his proposal of sending to Herod, she made no remark to him, but instantly enforced the propriety and necessity of dispatching after him a fleet and faithful courier. Joseph, accustomed to submit to her dictation, because he dreaded the violence of her temper, directed two men to prepare to follow the Tetrarch.

He wrote a short and simple statement, attributing her abrupt departure to excess of grief. Salome availed herself of the opportunity, and sent the following letter;

" Salome thy sister sends greeting and reverence to her brother Herod.—The winter torrents of misfortune are pouring down on me.—The brave and faithful Aulenus fell by some traitor's hand.—Scarce has his death been told by his friend, who accused him to thee, than my be-

loved Doris, thy wife, is swept away.—The young Antipater may now be left with Malchus without her heart being broken with sorrow for the loss of her only child.—She, I think, is now in her father Abraham's bosom, waiting for him. I have induced my husband to dispatch this courier to thee. Mariamne over-ruled his wish to do so, and requested that Babarrah and an hundred horse might scour the country to redeem her.—They may seek in vain—Now she has no rival, and may, if thou art willing to marry the Triumvir's love, alone possess thee. Perhaps the nuptials would have been postponed if Aulenus had returned. I am thy sister; thou art dear to me, and I cannot help suspecting that thy happiness, nay life, may hang on a more frail support than thou art willing to see. I have filled these tablets in haste, for the couriers are waiting.—May thy life be prolonged, and thy understanding be enlightened.—Our mother is well, and salutes thee.—*Salome.*"

She rolled up and sealed this letter, and gave it, with a present, to one of the couriers.

Several days elapsed before the return of

Babarrah. During the interval, Salome had been most actively employed in pursuing her enquiries for Doris, and in endeavouring to insinuate that she had been made away with. Two other minions at the same time hinted the belief that existed in the Palace of Mariamne being enamoured of the Tetrarch, but too proud to share his affections with another woman. These reports were soon noised abroad, and excited considerable agitation among the soldiers and the inhabitants; more particularly among the latter, as Doris was their countrywoman. Tezellah brought this intelligence to Dermah, who saw the perilous situation in which Mariamne was placed. She clearly perceived, that the Princess would in all probability become, not only an object of suspicion, but perhaps the victim of the false impression, excited in the minds of a quickly prejudiced and fiery populace.

The cause of the hatred borne by Salome to the Princess was well known to her, and also the implacable fierceness of her character: how to act under such complicated circumstances she

hardly knew, and looked for the return of Babarrah with great anxiety.

It was not long before surmises were expressed among the soldiery, of Aulenus not having come fairly by his death, and that he was the bearer of information which there were reasons for the Tetrarch's not being acquainted with. These matters were soon publicly canvassed; and then the first fabricators added the conjecture, of whether the loss of Doris was connected with the other occurrences.

Suspicions and conjectures scattered among an ignorant and impassioned multitude are soon converted into facts and proofs, and acted on with vehemence, and persisted in with pertinacity. The injuries they inflict are seldom repaired by justice, since no individual deems himself more responsible than the rest. The opinions formed by people when under the influence of strong impressions are seldom quite obliterated, for the violent and ignorant are always the most prejudiced.

The first intimation Mariamne received of this unjust impression against her was when proceed-

ing on the Sabbath to the place of worship: suddenly there arose on every side loud cries of;

"Where is Doris? Where is the Tetrarch's wife? Will the law of jealousy find it out?"

She looked round, and to her horror perceived that the accusations were levelled at her. The cries were redoubled, tumult arose, and even some missiles were hurled. By that time she had gained an elevated place near the entrance of the Synagogue. Her spirit was roused though her soul was bitterly wounded; she cast back her veil, and waved her hand in token of silence. The sounds of tumult died away like the passing rush of a sudden blast of wind, or the wasting strength of a surf upon the shore.

At first her voice trembled and her lip became pale. A fervent prayer for help was winged from her soul to heaven. The blood returned to her lip and mantled in her cheek; though the tears started from her eyes, her expression bore more the character of indignation than a feeling of injury. In a clear and almost thrilling voice she exclaimed;

" The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion. You have falsely, shamefully, and as cowards accused an Asmonean princess of foul and infamous crimes which by our law are worthy of death. My fathers were righteous, and valiant in the cause of God and Israel: their spirits can now feel for the deadly insult offered to their daughter—How have ye remunerated the blood they shed for you? I have not their prowess or valour, but I have the spirit of a woman and of an Asmonean, and fear no earthly danger when my honour and the honour of my race is unjustly attacked. I deny, by the Unutterable Name, your accusation—I will repeat my oath on his sacred altar, and trust in the God of Israel to deliver me from the hands of mine enemies and those that hate me. Is there one among ye who will stand forward and accuse me? What, are ye silent and abashed? Go trace to its foul source this venomous report, and when you have discovered the mouth which uttered it, return and tell me.—Hear again"

She unbound with trembling hand a coronet

from her brow blazing with jewels, and holding it out exclaimed;

"The mighty Judas Maccabæus tore these jewels from the head of the tyrant Antiochus when he oppressed Israel, and his children have worn it in remembrance of his triumph. The man, the woman, or the child who brings intelligence of Doris shall receive it with a blessing from the injured Mariamne's hands."

She covered her face, and tried as she walked towards the temple to suppress her tears, her bosom heaved, and now and then a large tear fell upon the pavement.

The multitude were moved, and murmurs were heard to rise and subside, as if they were ashamed of their injustice. The soldiers were won by her nobility and beauty, and the recollections called forth by her reference to the heroes of her race; the people by her princely air and munificence, and by the weight which youth and beauty always give to declarations of innocence and injury.

When the temple was full and all was hushed, she walked towards the altar, and kneeling, swore

by the Unutterable Name, that she was falsely accused. She then arose and vowed the value of an hundred burnt offerings on the restoration of Doris.

Salome had watched her victim during the whole of this scene, and though she was satisfied of her innocence exulted in the pain she had given: yet the conviction of her error only added to her perplexity and doubt, and her intense desire to know whom Antony had visited near Straton, and why he had been induced to do so.

When Alexandra heard what had passed she openly expressed her suspicion that Salome had spread the report, and even accused her in the presence of her mother and Joseph. Loud altercation and subsequent separation and hostility were the consequences. Salome's mother deprecated the hatred her daughter bore for the descendant of the royal race that had raised and enriched them, but could not believe that so horrid and malicious a report originated with her, and ordered her to deny it.

Mariamne had retired within the recesses of her apartments, and gave herself up to the grief

engendered by a wounded spirit, yet she made every exertion to gain tidings of Doris, whom she thought had followed Herod, urged by a paroxysm of grief for the loss of her son.

Babarrah returned without having gained the least intelligence. He was deeply affected when he learnt what had passed; and his proud spirit was chafed when he heard that he had been virtually accused of murdering Aulenus. He directly appeared among the soldiers, and to Joseph and his peers distinctly denied that he had met his death by him; at the same time he affirmed that his treachery to Herod and his intended villainy deserved death, and would have sanctioned his inflicting it. He had scarcely finished speaking when some of his horsemen, who had to perform a larger circuit, came in, bringing with them several robbers of Hezekiah's gang; among them were two whom Babarrah recognised as forming a part of the band by whom Aulenus had been killed. The sword which had been taken from one of them was discovered to be that which Aulenus wore: on the other was found his vest. Shouts of joyful acclamation rent the air—the

proud Babarrah turned away his horse's head and rode towards the upper part of the fortress. The information was soon conveyed to Salome, who was secretly chagrined at the discovery. She was ready to suspect it a trick of Babarrah's, but he had rode in a different direction, and the numbers were too great, the details of the capture of the robbers too circumstantial, to leave, even to her, room for doubting the truth. It removed the impression against the Princess, and the recoil affected the character of Salome.

The reward offered by the Princess had instilled great activity into many who could not have been stimulated by any other means, and they formed themselves into parties and searched the country, but no tidings were obtained of the fugitive.

One morning Tezellah, according to her usual custom, had gone to the foot of the rock to get cool and fresh water from a spring for the use of Mariamne; as she was filling the vessel two of the sect of the Essenes came to drink and fill their leathern bottles; she perceived on the head

of the female, who had received some injury, a linen bandage ornamented with a border similar to one she had seen in the possession of Doris, and without hesitation enquired where she had obtained it. The sect of the Essenes were remarkable, among other excellencies, for their love of truth. The woman simply replied;

"My child, the bandage on my head was given me by a forlorn and sick woman whom my brother Mazrah found almost dead with want near our present place of abode; I nursed her, and she made me accept this bandage as a pledge of her gratitude. The illness of a relation compelled me to come here, so I left her, four days since, under the care of my mother and brother; my relation is dead, and we are now going back."

Tezellah made enquiries enough to satisfy her that it was Doris. She bade them stay by the spring until her return, assuring them that their intelligence was of consequence. The kindness and simplicity of these people required no farther inducement; and Tezellah left them with the certainty of their esteeming their promise sacred.

As soon as she reached the fortress, she hastened to Mariamne's room, and entered without ceremony.

The Princess did not observe her breathless state as her head was turned from her, but gently said;

"Tezellah, I have missed your usual morning tribute of cold water"——

She replied, as well as her quickened breathing would permit.

"Princess, I met at the spring two Essenes, an aged man and a woman, who have nursed and sheltered Doris."

Mariamne rose hastily, and looking at Tezellah exclaimed;

"Tell me again—did I hear correctly? Doris found among the pure and good Essenes."

"Such is the joyful message which I bear, now I will return for the water."

"Stay, stay," said Mariamne. Then turning to Dermah who stood near her, hastily exclaimed;

"O Dermah, we should both be thankful."

She bent on her knee, bowed her head, and fervently uttered;

"Thanks unto thee, O King of Israel, who hast heard my prayer."

She arose, and bade Dermah to immediately summon her husband, and return with him: in the same breath she directed Tezellah to prepare some clothes for her, and sought herself for her travelling apparel.

Babarrah came, and meeting her in the anteroom did obeisance, she quickly said;

"Rise good and brave Babarrah; I give thee thanks, and thy wife too, for all that ye have done for me. I am going to assist poor Doris, who in her distress had tried to follow her child, and is now, where she is safe, with some Essenes. I am on my way to communicate the intelligence, and my intention to Joseph. Let Reuben and Jonathan attend me as well as yourself, if you can go, and have ready two steady well trained horses for the Essenes."

Babarrah attempted to dissuade her, but she stopped him, and said with a little authority;

"I shall be ready before you, unless you hasten."

Dermah smiled with delight at the spirited

determination of the Princess, and felt that her care had not been ill bestowed.

Joseph had left the fortress, and was proceeding to the plain to inspect some horse newly raised. Mariamne wishing to depart without the knowledge of Salome, who had not left her room, hastened to the court yard, and found Babarrah and twenty followers ready in their zeal to devote themselves to death for her.

She mounted her favourite horse, and rode with speed to the spring. The gentle Essenes saw their quick approach without apprehension, or attempting to escape. When the cavalcade surrounded them, the woman's face became pale, but she neither moved nor spoke, the old man's countenance retained its calm and benevolent look.

Mariamne rode towards them and said;

"The blessings of the God of Abraham be on you, for the intelligence you have brought. Lead us to where our sister is, and the reward I have promised shall be yours—We have two well trained horses for you."

The old man arose, and bowing his head nearly to the ground said;

" Thanks noble Princess, for unless my aged eyes deceive me, thou art Alexander's daughter, we will lead thee and thy followers to our retreat, where thou wilt find thy sister, but we disclaim against reward, and refuse a recompence for deeds of brotherly kindness—The way is long and tedious; your generous and beautiful steeds may tire before they have borne you there, if you ride as fast as you did when you approached us—I have been a soldier in my youth, and can with thy command regulate your pace, as well as guide your steps."

The simplicity, yet firmness of the old man delighted Mariamne, who with courteous look and words, constituted him their guide. They went to Joseph. She communicated the information to him, and in spite of his intreaties rode away, as she exclaimed ;

" An Asmonean Princess shall never be accused of dishonourable deeds, without putting her enemies to shame, and confusion of face—I will be Doris nurse, and never leave her, until she is again under the protection of Herod—Farewell."

Joseph was compelled to exert his authority to prevent the troops from following her. Such conduct in a woman of their beloved race, inspired them with enthusiastic devotion.

Although the season had so far advanced, that the heat was not very oppressive, they halted for several hours, and proceeded towards sun-set. As the night came on, they approached a gloomy wood which grew on the descent of a lofty mountain. Babarrah merely enquired if it was probable, that any excepting their friends were there, and on being assured that he need not be apprehensive, prepared to enter it. He had brought, as was customary, many torches which were lighted. The old Essene rode between two soldiers, each bearing one, a few yards in front to guide those who followed; on either side at intervals others were carried by the soldiers, which cast above, and beyond them, their uncertain light into the foliage, and among the stems of the trees, making the distant recesses wear a more awful appearance. The only sounds which mingled now and then with the

even tread of the horses, were the cries and rustling of the birds roused by the noise and glare. The night had far advanced when a turning brought them to a steep descent. The moon had risen, and poured its mild and silvery beams through a wide opening, between two distant lofty crags, shewing in the vale beneath them, a sequestered peaceful village, surrounded by vineyards, olive gardens, fields of corn, and enclosures in which reposed a few animals. As soon as they emerged from the forest, the watch dogs roused by the torches and noise, gave the alarm. First, the cattle rose from their lairs and gazed on the descending troop; then several men appeared, who soon roused their neighbours, so that in a few minutes there were at least fifty men arrayed to defend their homes. When they had approached very near, the old Essene requested Babarrah to order the cavalcade to stop, and permit himself, and his companion to go down to the village. In a few minutes most of the men dispersed, and called up their friends and families, while others came quickly towards them. They approached the

Princess, and after paying her obeisance, one older than the rest said ;

" Welcome to the daughter of the Lord's anointed. Peace, and heavenly contemplation await on you. All we humble Essenes have is thine. Thy sister Doris is, by the will of her Creator, and from the effect of causes, fast returning to health. Princess, allow an aged father to conduct thee and thy female attendants to her."

Mariamne immediately complied, and followed by Dermah and Tezellah, was conducted by the old man to the door of a clean and lowly cabin.

As soon as they had left the cavalcade, the Essene next in age, addressed Babarrah in the same simple and courteous manner, and led him, and several of his men to another part of the village. The next in age did the same, and so on until all were taken care of. There was not heard from them, one churlish discontented word at the interruption, or the number of their guests ; they provided them and their horses with food and shelter, asked if they could farther assist them, then left them to sleep, and retired to their homes.

Mariamne hastened into the cabin, and found Doris in an inner room, on a clean but humble bed, awake and evidently alarmed at the unusual disturbance. She was much agitated at the sight of Mariamne, who directly embraced her, and with tears of joy expressed her happiness at having discovered her. The traces of sickness were too visibly pourtrayed on her face to leave any doubt of the state in which she had been, and also that she was yet far from being strong enough to undertake the journey to Massada; even her mind was evidently weakened by disease. As soon as her agitation was in some measure subdued, she asked for her child and Herod, and expressed her desire to proceed directly to Arabia to redeem him. Mariamne consoled her, but it was long before she could induce her to compose herself to sleep; she wrapped herself in her upper garment, and reposed on a mat close to her.

At day light they were awakened by the sound of many voices of the Essenes offering up their supplications before they proceeded to their daily tasks. Doris remarked; "You

only hear the prayers of these pious people; at the fifth hour, they will call on us to rise, and Esther will come to me with food, and Mazrah will soon follow to enquire for my health."

She placed her head on her hand, and again composed herself to sleep.

Before the fifth hour Esther came, and standing in the middle of the room, said in a loud yet sonorous voice;

"Daughters awake, and rise, and thank the God of Israel for the blessings of sleep. Peace and welcome to you."

Mariamne looked on her with surprise, for she had never before been with any of this celebrated sect.

Esther was past the middle period of life, tall, and finely moulded: she wore a tunic of linen, and a coarse garment girded round the waist, which fell in full and graceful folds from her shoulder. Her face was an example of serenity, while her eyes wore the character of beaming benevolence, mingled with enthusiasm, to which feeling she gave no utterance. Her attentions were without effort, and without man-

ner; they proceeded from habitual benevolence, and were not marked with the character, which implied even the semblance of obligation. She gently raised Doris, arranged her bed, refreshed her with water, then kissed her, and prepared her simple meal. Similar attentions were shewn to the Princess, who then was conducted by her to a commodious tent, round which were benches and tables; in the centre was one for her. This mark of distinction was paid her on account of her rank, for the Essenes were scrupulous in their obedience and respect to those whom they believed were placed by Providence in authority over them. Soon after, many men and women came in, each in passing did her obeisance. When all were seated, an elder arose, and returned solemn thanks for the food they were going to partake of; no sooner had he ceased, than several of the brethren entered, and after they had respectfully supplied the Princess, placed before each a dish of food. When all had finished the meal, the elder arose, and returned fervent thanks; then they all remained for some minutes in deep contemplation, during

which period, scarce a breath was heard; afterwards they again paid obeisance to the Princess, and returned to their allotted tasks, after they had taken off their white garments, and resumed their labouring dresses.

Nearly all the countenances wore the same serene contemplative character as Esther's, most of them were beautifully formed, and even those whose silvery locks told that many years had passed with them, seemed to enjoy "a green old age," for their strength had not failed them, neither had their eye grown dim.

Babarrah met the Princess at the entrance of the tent, and after saluting her in the usual manner, enquired for Doris, and requested to hear her commands as to their future proceedings. She smiled when she directed him to send his men to labour with the Essenes while they remained there, and advised him to follow her example, and derive instruction from their laws and habits; she added;

"For Doris is too ill to be moved, I will not leave her, and I cannot send you back."

He then begged to dispatch two of his men

with the intelligence to Massada; Jonathan and Reuben were selected for that purpose, they did not require to be instructed in what they should report, since they knew the bitterness of Salome's feeling towards the Princess.

When Mariamne returned to Doris apartment, she found Mazrah with her, and enquiring into her state. He was considered though young, one of the most skilful of their sect in all cases of sickness, since in his youth, his father being an Hellenistic Jew, he had availed himself of the instruction of a Greek physician of great celebrity, and attained considerable knowledge of the art. His manner was most gentle, his inquiries very minute, his language consolatory. Before he gave any directions, he sat apparently in deep contemplation, then instructed Esther how to express and mingle the juices of certain herbs, and when to administer them.

Mariamne, as well as the other women, were evidently struck with Mazrah's beauty and address. He was built like a tower, and more than six feet in height, his limbs were so finely proportioned, that their symmetry prevented

his immense strength from being too remarkable. —His hair fell in large ringlets over his shoulders. Every feature was perfect, and his whole expression was stamped with the impress of nobleness and reflection: now and then gleams would cross it as if the creative powers of genius were playing within, and were hardly prevented from pouring forth the newly-combined ideas arrayed in power, grace, and beauty, without the marks of toil.—His language was simple, but his thoughts seemed the emanations of heavenly feelings, with a more than human knowledge. The occupations allotted to him by the curators of the society, were to attend the sick, instruct the uninitiated, and expound the mysteries of their worship. The superiority of his understanding, and the unblemished purity of his character, had obtained for him these high distinctions long before his age entitled him to them. Esther was his elder sister, by whom he had been induced to enter into the community where her husband had placed her some years before. Owing to this relationship, he usually dwelt with her.

Doris recovery was so slow, that ten days had

elapsed, and she was yet unable to return. Mariamne's sisterly attention so won the heart of the afflicted mother, that she no longer saw in her the monster Salome had painted; but a kind and high-minded friend, whom circumstances had placed in a most trying situation, and one equally distressing to her. Some of the fears she had entertained, in case of Herod's allying himself to her, were weakened; and she sometimes thought, that she might be esteemed the wife of Herod, and her son considered as his eldest born, though Mariamne shared his love.—Still she revolted, as well as the Princess, at the degrading custom of their country.

Both Dermah and Babarrah seemed attracted by the life of this united sect, and privately consulted on availing themselves of their freedom, and passing their remaining days preparing for another state of existence, while the preparation enabled them to partake of that happiness which in this life is alone without alloy.

The Princess had paid minute attention to all their customs, habits, and manners, which to a mind like her's, were more than commonly at-

tractive, particularly when contrasted with the vanity, vice, violence, and vexation of spirit revelling in the world from which she had accidentally withdrawn. At the request of Dermah, the Princess asked Mazrah to detail to them their opinions, and the differences, between them and the mass of their own and bordering nations. He complied, as did every member of the community, when asked to do any thing not inconsistent with their ideas of rectitude.

Doris was reclining on her bed; the Princess sat near her on some cushions placed on a carpet; Dermah and Tezellah were seated at her feet; Mazrah, leaning on the sill of the open lattice, thus spoke.

"When the tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes cruelly entreated our nation, the forefathers of our society fled to the recesses of the mountains, and there, in solitude and security, practised the true obligations of the law. Their example has been followed by their children, and their proselytes; and many among them have received revelations from the angelic messengers, and by their instruction and contemplation discovered

the mysteries in the divine books; and have written them on records which we possess, but which we never communicate to those whose professions have not sustained the proof of a trial for two years.

"We have every thing in common. Those who become members of the society, give all they possess to the common stock; and receive, with their brethren, all that is necessary for the comfort and preservation of life.

"We are all equal. As piety and experience teach us, the elders are reverenced, they speak the first in our assemblies, and are also our curators in turns.

"The labour of each is for the general good; we apply ourselves to those tasks for which our elders consider us best adapted.

"When we leave our homes, we take neither money nor apparel, but sometimes a defensive weapon; for wherever we go, those of our society dwelling there, give us all that is necessary for us; and if we have aught convenient to them, they take it.

"We never dissent on matters of property.

When civil dissension occurs, which is very seldom, or when any brother or sister has flagrantly erred, an hundred elders consult, and their decree is final.

"Wine is forbidden us; our fare is simple; our garments homely; our labour light and regular. We neither seek nor avoid marriage, but undertake it with circumspection.

"We never swear; but our fidelity and truth are not to be shaken. Our communications are simple and open. We despise riches; and neither buy nor sell; we seduously avoid all leagues, and never enter into wars nor fabricate weapons of destruction. The miseries of life we look on with indifference, since the body is only the corruptible organ which the soul inhabits and directs during this existence.—That soul is most subtle vapour, drawn by a natural law into the prison of the body, and there is bound in the bonds of flesh, but when released by death, it rejoices and mounts upwards, and becomes an inhabitant of glorious regions, and the companion of the heavenly messengers."

He became more animated as he proceeded,

and though he restrained himself, he spoke with fervour, which added to his beauty; his audience was attentive, and deeply interested; he continued;

"The riches, glory, ambition, contention, warfare, vain learning, the alienation of feeling from our fellow-mortals, the vicious pleasures, the unnecessary luxuries, the empty occupations, the parade, and pride of life, we avoid; and by so doing, escape more than half the miseries which assail poor fallen and erring man. To ensure us contentment here, and bliss hereafter, we swear to honour and serve God; to be just to all; not to injure though commanded; to feel aversion for the wicked, to assist to the utmost of our power the good; to keep unimpeached our fidelity and truth, particularly to our rulers, since God hath appointed them; and never to abuse that power if we should be called to exercise it; not even to assume a better garb, and by no means to oppress our inferiors. We swear also to bear inviolable love for truth, and to condemn severely those who speak falsely; neither to take nor covet the property of others,

nor even desire unjust gain; never to conceal from our brethren any of the mysteries of our religion, nor make them known to others though menaced with death.—We carefully preserve our books, and the names of those who received them. Such are the oaths which every one desirous of embracing our mode of life must take and adhere to, for they who break them are cast out to live with the beasts of the field, until compassion is shewn towards them; for we profess mercy, love, charity, and forgiveness to all, and thus fortify ourselves against the vices and temptations of mankind."

He ceased. They waited in silence to hear a continuation of those "sounds that to thoughts of heaven the fancy led;" but he seemed wrapped in contemplation which no one disturbed: at length he gently turned and went away, and yet they all remained without speaking until Mariamne exclaimed;

"Such laws, such conduct are of heaven, and turn this vale of woe and blood into a type of the pleasant places of Eden. O that all men would follow the example of the noble Mazrah and his

brethren; O that their glory was in the conquest over all the evil and imperfections of man, and their triumphs the reward of virtue; emulation for the attainment of them would excite joy in all, and be an inexhaustible source of new, endless, and life-bearing glory."

They assented, and again were silent until some occupation demanded their attention.

Mariamne made many enquiries into the habits and conduct of the people who had so kindly received them, and found their *precepts* and their *practice accord*, which accordance never existed in any other religion, excepting that which had divinity for its founder, and which Divine Being never rebuked the Essenes. There were errors in their creed, but those she did not discover; they arose from mysticism and enthusiasm carried beyond the bounds of discretion, and not from worldly and impious motives.

Mazrah was her chief instructor, and with him she often strayed to see the brethren and the women at their various occupations. The more she associated with him the more her desire encreased to receive information from him. Ba-

barrah and Dermah observed that the Princess became more thoughtful, and that her cheek changed its hue even when the voice or step of Mazrah was heard.

They consulted together, and though both agreed that she would be happier as the wife of Mazrah, yet both were too well assured that she was betrothed to Herod, not to earnestly wish to hasten her departure, before she was aware of the subtle poison which was stealing into her heart.

Mariamne had never before seen exalted virtue, nobility of soul, expansion of mind, and consummate beauty united in man: these qualities were possessed by her, and it seemed as if her congenial soul naturally sought an union with its fellow. It was no wonder that she became thoughtful—it was no wonder that nature began to exert her right.

One evening Mazrah bade them a more than usually kind farewell; on the following morning he had departed, for even he had not learned to combat the mighty power of love and so had flown.

Doris had recovered, and Babarrah saw that

there was danger even in remaining on the spot, and urged their return to Massada. They left the glen of the Essenes, followed by the sounds of prayer offered for their welfare. Several of the soldiers went with reluctance, and promised to return and dwell among them.

CHAPTER IX.

On their arrival at Massada they found Joseph, the garrison, and the people in great alarm, for reports had reached them of the approach of Antigonus with a powerful army. The intelligence excited no surprise but great anxiety in Babarrah, who immediately busied himself in making preparations for defending the place.

The return of Doris with the Princess raised the latter higher than ever in the estimation of the people, while it filled Salome with vexation and perplexity. Alexandra embraced her daughter, and pretended to have suffered more anxiety than she had really felt at her abrupt departure. Mariamne was dutiful and affectionate, yet she could not confide in the sincerity of her mother, after being acquainted with her general proceed-

ings, and being aware of how little maternal love she bore towards her.

The son of Phasaelus, and young Antipater the son of Doris, had been left at Petra on account of the salubrity of the air; Herod, desirous of examining the state of the place, had gone there in his way to Arabia, and had taken the son of Phasaelus and not Antipater to be left with king Malchus as a pledge. One of the persons about the Palace had overheard Herod express the intention of taking his son, and had unwisely misled Doris, and caused her so much unnecessary grief. On her entering the Palace the first objects which attracted her attention were the two children at play. She flew towards them and clasped her supposed lost child to her bosom.

The son of Phasaelus had been sent back by Herod; Malchus had dispatched messengers to the Tetrarch when he heard of his arrival in his country, to request him to depart, since the Parthians had declared themselves prepared to wage war on him if he entertained him. Herod on receiving this intimation dismissed a great por-

tion of his retinue, directing them to take the son of Phasaelus to Massada, and direct some one to escort his own son Antipater there also. The Tetrarch with his few remaining followers hastened to Egypt. On his reaching Rhinocolura he heard of his brother's cruel death.

Phasaelus being imprisoned by Antigonus knew that he would take away his life, and considering it dishonourable to die by his hands, dashed his head against a stone. Antigonus directed his physicians to pour poison into the wound, and so destroyed him. Herod loved his brother, mourned for him, and waited for an opportunity of avenging his death on Antigonus.

Malchus had repented of his mean behaviour to Herod, and sent couriers to overtake and induce him to return, but he indignantly rejected their entreaties, and persevered in his resolution of going to Rome.

Difficulties opposed his readily effecting his purpose, for at Pelusium he could not induce the mariners to convey him. The magistrates treated him with great honour, and advised him to go

to Alexandria, where Cleopatra made many overtures to him to remain in her service, but he declined them, and at length, after many hindrances, arrived at Brundusium and proceeded directly to Rome.

He immediately appealed to Antony and Octavianus, and by argument, promises of money, and a recapitulation of the actions of his father obtained more than he sought for or anticipated; for the senate was convened, and he introduced by Messala and Atratinus. These two noble senators stated and extolled the services of Herod and his family, and denounced Antigonus as a turbulent, rebellious, and troublesome man, inimical to the Romans, and who had with effrontery accepted from the Parthians the crown of Judæa. Antony seconded their words, and declared the advantage of having Herod as an ally against the Parthians. Herod to his amazement was unanimously elected King of Judæa. He was conducted by Octavianus and Antony with great pomp and ceremony, accompanied by the consuls and senators to the Capitol, and there inaugurated king. He hastened back,

after remaining seven days, to Judæa, and arrived at Ptolemais after three months absence.

The chief objects on his arrival at Rome were to procure assistance in restoring peace to Judæa, and to obtain the crown for Aristobulus the brother of his beloved Mariamne, and then to serve under him as his minister and general. He had been elected king, and now had reached beyond the highest hopes his ambitious mind had ever entertained. He sometimes doubted how Mariamne would receive the intelligence, but as he had not sought the crown, he knew she could not blame him: he indulged in dreams of greatness, in the noblest conduct towards her and her family, and looked forward to being united to the woman who was his constant thought, though surrounded by danger and care.

On his landing he heard that Antigonus was closely besieging Massada, and more anxious for Mariamne's safety than his kingdom, he exerted every nerve, and by his address and generosity raised an army, won over to his interest nearly

the whole province of Galilee, and obtained orders from Antony to receive assistance from Dellius and Ventidius.

While he was thus vigorously preparing to relieve Massada, Antigonus pressed the siege.

Joseph and Babarrah knew too well the cruel disposition and intentions of their enemy, not to be determined never to yield up the place while hope remained, and never to see Mariamne and the other women fall into his hands. The situation of Massada precluded the possibility of assault by escalade, and the strength of the besieging army was too great for the besieged to anticipate much success from making sorties on them. Antigonus formed a cordon round the place at too great a distance for missiles to reach them, and waited the slow effects of famine and discontent.

As it was known that Herod had gone to Rome, a courier had been dispatched to inform him of the approach of Antigonus, and they anxiously hoped that he would be able to compel his enemy to raise the siege. Babarrah depended greatly on his activity and military skill, but Joseph

dreaded that treachery and vengeance might cut him off.

Several weeks elapsed and only a few sorties had raised the flagging spirits of the soldiery. The inhabitants began to feel the want of water and provision, and careless under whose government they lived, murmured at their privations, and requested their commanders to deliver up the place to Antigonus. Their request was refused and their spirits somewhat raised by their being assured that Herod was coming to relieve them. Day succeeded day and no tidings of his approach reached them. It was reported that his messengers had been unable to pass the besieger's camp, and that he would soon be seen descending from the distant hills. The weather became hotter, the want of water greater; the murmurs of the people became loud, and open complaints were fast infecting the new raised soldiers. Many attempts were made to get possession of the spring near the foot of the precipice, but it was found to be impossible either by stratagem or force.

During this eventful time dissension existed

among the inmates of the Palace. Although Salome was ever bent on fomenting them, she took no active steps against the Princess, since the excitement in her favour had not yet subsided, and she was beloved by the soldiers; moreover Salome was too anxious for her own safety to think of the destruction of others.

Alexandra had long been tired of the monotony of a fortress, and wished to be at Jerusalem. The army of Antigonus appeared to her so large that she concluded he was firmly seated on the throne, and herself and family were depending on a ruined man. While Herod was supported by Antony she was not averse to his being allied to her daughter, though from motives of paltry interest she had been desirous of keeping them in a state by which she could enrich herself. Now she deemed Herod a ruined outcast, her greatest wish was to throw herself under the protection of the Romans, and appeal to Antony, with the hope that Mariamne's beauty would prove a means of obtaining any request she might make, and of ensuring her an asylum at Rome. With these intentions

she sought Mariamne, and after embracing her said;

" In this great straight I care but little for myself, it is for my own, my beloved children that I am most anxious; more especially for you; Aristobulus is too young to excite the apprehension of Antigonus, moreover he would find protection among the people—But where will you my beauteous girl find protection? Herod is either slain, or so low in circumstances that he cannot aid us. The people are with difficulty prevented from opening their gates, the soldiers are murmuring, the water is almost expended, the provision gone. If we fall into the hands of Antigonus, rely on it he will send us to Parthia as a part of the five hundred women promised to their king for his assistance—Is it not better that we should shield ourselves from slavery, and infamy, by seeking the protection of the Roman commander? Salome, with whom I have so often dissented, but with whom in our necessity I have consulted, agrees with me in this.

Shall we propose to Joseph and Babarrah to

get us out of this fortress, and place us under the protection of the Romans?"

Mariamne was perplexed, for she clearly saw that Salome agreed to her mother's proposal, because it would facilitate the scheme she had of putting her in the Triumvir's power, on the other hand, she thought with horror of being consigned to a barbarian king, to be made the slave, or concubine of a favourite, or a ferocious captain. After a short time she replied;

"Mother, our situation is dreadful, but not hopeless, then why should we yield ourselves up to despair? Was not Bethulia straitened, and did not prayer obtain relief, let us follow the example of Judith, and the Lord will send us rain to fill our cisterns, and we shall faint no more."

She ceased speaking for a short time, a tear fell from her eye, and she seemed offering up the supplication she had proposed, and then continued;

"Our warriors are stout, and our cause is just; if we are compelled to yield the fortress,

could we not, under the protection of a body of them, reach Petra, and there wait for Herod, unless it pleases Providence to direct us elsewhere? To fall into the Parthians, or the Romans hands, would be equally horrible to me. Death would be preferable to either. Mother, I will not give myself up to despair, but trust the God of my fathers. Until we have only the choice of death by famine or escape left, I will not agree to your proposal."

Alexandra looked angrily at her, and said;

"You have ever opposed your mother in all her wishes for your welfare, and even betrothed yourself without consulting me—now, from some vain superstition, you are ready to sacrifice me and all of us—You shall obey me."

Mariamne heard with patience her mother's weak and angry speech, then gently replied;

"The good Hyrcanus told me, that I had your sanction as well as his for betrothing myself to Herod—I cannot recal my pledge without rebelling against the divine laws—I will not disobey you. You asked for my consent to your proposal, not for my obedience—The former I can-

not conscientiously give, the latter you may command without the fear of resistance."

Alexandra was softened by her reply, and went to consult with Salome on the measures to be pursued.

Three days passed without the arrival of any tidings from Herod, without the appearance of any succour. The cisterns were nearly emptied, the little water remaining in them was of a deleterious nature, the provisions were almost expended, gloom and dejection clouded every brow excepting Babarrah's, his eye flashed with indignation at every murmur, while his livid cheek and quivering lip told the progress that famine and anxiety were making in him. Salome, by her ascendancy over her husband Joseph, induced him to propose to Babarrah their putting the Asmonean family under the protection of the Roman power; the words had scarcely passed his lips, when the indignant Arab firmly said;

"I know you mean well, but as long as I can wield a faulchion, no Asmonean here shall thank a Roman for protection—No woman shall dupe

me by guiding him whom he ought to silence and command."

Joseph looked confounded, the Arab continued;

"My advice is, that we prepare to make a feigned assault on the enemy from the eastern gate, while we have at the western a chosen body of the horse, mounted on the fleetest beasts remaining, encircling all the women of the Tetrarch's household who choose to go, and who must conduct them to Petra, and if necessary cut their way through the enemy's camp."

Joseph saw the inutility of opposing him, and at once accorded with his proposal, adding;

"The sooner this plan is executed the better, for the little water we have may last a smaller number two or three days, in which time Herod may come."

Dermah learnt the plan from her husband, and told it to Mariamne, who prepared herself for the dreadful trial. A firm reliance on Providence, and passive resolution enabled her to appear even cheerful, and thus raise the drooping spirits of her companions.

The following evening the centinels were doubled: a body of three thousand men were prepared to make the feigned attack, while eight hundred were marshalled to escort the women. It was decided, that, as soon as the night had closed in, the attack should commence, and soon after the escort should hasten away.

The sun sunk beneath the horizon a dim and lurid ball; the air was still; the shades of night veiled the earth more rapidly than usual, which increased until the atmosphere was blackness; now and then blue forked lightning went like waving liquid fire through the clouds, and several meteors passed along and were lost; their blazing brightness was rendered terrific by the contrast of the dark canopy above them. Not a sound was heard through the fortress, for the deep darkness, and the appearances in the heavens had appalled the bravest with undefined apprehension.

Mariamne, and those who were to endeavour to reach Petra assembled in a hall adjoining the court yard. They were roused, some from their prayers, some from apathy, and some

from wandering thoughts, by the approaching heavy tread of an armed man: it was Babarrah coming to summon them away; he entered the hall with a firm step, and a calm determined look; he made obeisance to Alexandra and Mariamne, then said;

"Our guides know their way, as well as the beasts of the forest to their lairs.—The night is most propitious, for not an object is perceptible, excepting when now and then a flash of lightning acts like a torch to shew the road. Allow me to conduct you to where the horsemen are waiting your arrival."

They rose to follow him. As soon as Mariamne reached the open court, she raised her head, and tried to see into the obscurity above her, while she mentally sought protection from on high. She felt a drop of rain fall on her face, and exclaimed;

"The Lord is merciful, and will not suffer his servants to fall into the snares of their enemies. Lo! the heavens are opened, I felt the drop descend,—more will come. Babarrah, let us tarry here a few moments yet." While she spoke, large

drops fell at intervals, and the murmur of joy arose among the crowd. She retired behind them and returned to the hall, where in secret she poured forth her soul-felt thanks.

These drops were followed by others; then a sudden gust of wind rushed by, and torrents of rain came down as if shaken from their reservoirs: the blasts encreased, the clouds seemed pouring forth the accumulated dews and vapours of many months. The voices of thanks and joy rang through the city: even the animals, by their cries, appeared to return thanks for the unlooked-for blessing.

Babarrah, whose eyes sparkled with joy and high intent, bade them retire, then hastened to the men prepared to make the feigned sortie. He cheered them by a few words, and ordered them to follow him.

They issued in silence through the gate. He saw, by the lightning flash, the spot near the enemy's camp where their provisions and provender were stored. He pointed to the place with his sword as a flash displayed it, and cried;

" Follow me;—if dispersed, the western gate, or Ressa."

They stole along in a compact body, passed through a small valley, then deployed and surrounded the waggons and stores of the enemy. The rear formed, faced and attacked the camp; while the others harnessed the horses, and loaded themselves and the animals. The unexpected attack in that quarter, the darkness of the night, and the rain, made the enemy doubtful of the force of the assailants, and whether they were from the fortress or a foe on their flank. The trumpets were sounded, and the men cheered to confound the enemy still more. In a few minutes the waggons were hurried off, guarded on either side by one portion, while the remainder in the rear kept the amazed enemy at bay, as they retired to the fortress.

The gate was opened, and loud acclamations from the famished people told the great success. They revelled in the rain, and blessed the brave Babarrah.

The cisterns were filled before the day dawned, and it was found that they had captured ten

days' provisions. Public thanks were returned for the blessing, and hope again animated every bosom.

Several days elapsed, and still Herod did not appear. At length one evening at sunset, Babarrah was on the highest pinnacle of the tower, straining his sight to discover the expected succours. The last rays were glancing along the plain, and he was on the point of descending, when his eye wandered round to the distant hills: on the summit of a lofty mountain, across which was one of the passes to the plain, the rays of the sun, now below the horizon, lingered for a moment, and to his piercing eye discovered the flashing arms of a long array; he watched it with intense anxiety for the few seconds the declining light illumined it, then said to himself;

"It's him," and hastened to Joseph. As he passed, he saw his wife, and whispered, "They are here,—tell the Princess."

He put his finger on his lips, and passed on, well assured that she understood him.

The centinels were doubled; no one was

allowed to pass in or out, and silence was preserved, for Babarrah and Joseph both expected that Herod would directly attack the enemy.

They were not deceived in their expectation; for although Antigonus had harassed the Tetrarch's army on the march, and had nearly defeated Silo, who, contrary to the orders of Antony, had left him; yet Herod had deceived him, and now approached by forced marches and an unusual route.

Two lights shewn from the top of the tower as soon as night closed in; and their height above the level of the plain, were sufficient to inform Herod that his approach was known.

Joseph and Babarrah issued minute orders, gave out the pass-word, and prepared nearly the whole garrison to aid the Tetrarch by a great sortie, as soon as he attacked the besiegers.

About two hours before day-break, the watchmen reported that they heard the steady tramp of men at some distance. Every soldier in the garrison was ready with his weapons; the porters held the barriers of the doors; the

captains were on the watch towers, listening for the noise of the first assault.

Suddenly a thousand torches flamed in the air—a thousand trumpets sounded an attack —legions cheered and rushed on—whirlwinds of cavalry swept round the besieging host, and occupied the ground between them and the town, with detachments; while the others bore down on the astounded enemy, who had been thus roused from their deep sleep, and were either panic struck, seeking for their arms, or forming in small bodies, and opposing a desperate but vain resistance to the overwhelming assailants. As soon as the first attack commenced, Babarrah on the one side and Joseph on the other, rushed out, and by attacking the besiegers in different directions, completed the rout and slaughter.

When the sun arose in silent grandeur, and arrayed in noiseless splendour, it no longer shone on a thousand pavilions, or glittered on polished helms and spears, and moving bodies of men, glorying in anticipated triumph,—but on a plain strewed with the dying and the dead, tents over-

thrown, shattered arms, disabled horses, broken vehicles, and here and there some wandering plunderer, or perchance a woman, who had sought a husband or a dear relative, with the hope that life yet remained, and health might be restored by her unceasing care. Beyond, were those who guarded the field of blood. Within the fortress all was noise and joy.

END OF VOL. I.

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